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TALOFA

LETTERS FROM FOREIGN PARTS

BY

C. E. BAXTER

London:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.
1884.

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CHINA.

TALOFA.

CHINA.

INLAND SEA, JAPAN,
July 2nd, 187—.

I WISH I had the pen of a ready writer to describe to you the sight I have just witnessed. You must know that we are in the Inland Sea, which is about the most lovely place on the face of the earth, and at present in an open part of it, with a large expanse of water ahead, and hills behind and on both sides of us; the sun has just set ahead of the ship. Just on the horizon ahead is a low range of hills, and above the hills are light, streaky clouds; near the horizon the clouds are red, and gradually change to gold, and then silver of the most brilliant description. Above them is a beautiful blue sky, like you

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PART I.

CHINA.

we had to wait until Sir T. Wade came off to the ship, as he is going up with the Admiral. About half-past five Li-Hung-Chang and Sir Thomas Wade both came off, and Li started off at once for Tientsing in a steamer, attended by two Chinese gunboats, amid salutes and no end of row from a lot of men-of-war junks anchored in the harbour. We weighed about half an hour afterwards, and followed him up, hoping to overtake him in the night, as we wanted to get up the river first.

Saturday, September 16th.

We communicated with H.M.S. "I——" about eleven o'clock this morning, and found Admiral L. and party had gone up the river in the "M——." We then went on, and soon arrived in sight of the famous Taku Forts, where our ships had several tough fights before they succeeded in taking them. They certainly looked formidable, as we steamed between them into the mouth of the river, which winds about very much, through a perfectly flat country, and is very narrow. Some of the bends are so sharp that we could only just get round them, and at last we

came to the sharpest, which is in sight of Tientsing, and there we stuck, the "V——" being a longer ship than most that go up the river. While we were stuck here Li-Hung-Chang, whom we had passed just outside the river, passed us again; and this was the last we saw of him. After being delayed nearly an hour here, we were towed off the bank by the "F——" and proceeded up to Tientsing, where we arrived just after dark, and moored alongside the bank of the river, just opposite the Consul's house. We heard that a party of fourteen officers from the Flying Squadron had started that morning in boats.

Sunday, September 17th.

To-day there were great discussions as to which we should do—go up to Pekin by boat or by carts. The Consul, whom we went to for advice, said the roads were quite impassable on account of the late rains. But from other accounts we heard that the roads were all right, and we preferred to believe them. As the journey up by boats would take four or five days, against the current, we decided to go in carts, hoping to get to Pekin in two days. The Admiral's

and Minister's party started at four o'clock in the afternoon, in a fleet of nine boats; and as our carts would not be ready until late in the night, we had to wait. Having nothing to do in the afternoon, a party of five, including myself, started off on donkeys to visit the city of Tientsing. Shortly after our start, as we were cantering along with the donkey-boys thwacking the donkeys from behind, Dr. D.'s stirrup broke, and off he went, bringing the donkey down with him. Captain B., being just behind, fell over doctor, donkey and all, in a heap; but they soon got on to their legs again, and nobody was hurt; so we went on and visited the ruins of the Roman Catholic cathedral, which was burnt down some years ago, at the time of the massacre of the French missionaries.

As we had to start at two o'clock in the morning in our carts, we all went to bed pretty early, in order to get as much sleep as possible.

Monday, September 18th.

At two o'clock a.m. we were all turned out, and after having a cup of cocoa and some biscuits we proceeded on to the road,

where we found fourteen carts ready for us,—ten of which were for us to travel in, and four for the servants, baggage, and food. Having my bedding with me, I made my bed inside the cart, determined to try and sleep until daylight. At half-past two we all started, making enough row going through the settlement to wake all the inhabitants. We all found sleeping out of the question, as the jolting was quite beyond all description. I tried all sorts of positions, but all to no purpose, and at last found that the only way to get on was to sit on the outside of the cart, alongside the driver. At about 8 a.m. we came to a part of the road which went along the bank of the river, and here we overtook the Admiral's party; they were just waking up and cooking breakfast. After saying good morning we went on, and soon lost sight of them again. At about twelve o'clock we reached the village of Yang-tsun, where we had luncheon, consisting of bread, fruit, and potted meat. After a stay of an hour we started again, and reached the village of Ho-si-wu at 6 p.m. Here we dined off potted soup, beef, &c., after which we were all pretty tired, and spreading our

beds on the floor of the rooms were soon fast asleep.

I may as well give you a description of a Chinese inn, in one of which we stopped every night. It consists of a stone-paved yard, which was just large enough to hold our fourteen carts and their mules (two to each cart). Round this yard were small rooms, furnished with a matted K'ang, or sort of bed, a chair and table, and generally infested with fleas, and by no means of the cleanest description.

Tuesday, September 19th.

We were turned out at two o'clock this morning, and after the usual cup of cocoa started off in the carts, with all the wraps round us that we could muster, as it was bitterly cold at this time in the morning. At about 11 a.m. we arrived at Chang-kin-wan, where we had luncheon. This place is the site of the only regular battle in which the Tartars and our troops engaged.

After an hour's stay here we started again, and about half-past three arrived in sight of Pekin. We were then only about one mile

from the city, which is so low that from no point of approach do you see it, until almost underneath the walls. We were stopped at the gates to show our passports; but they did not detain us long, and we then proceeded to the British legation, to ascertain where we could stop for the night. We there found the sergeant of the legation guard, who took us to hotels. There are three European hotels in the city, all near the legation; four of our party were lodged at one which is kept by a Dane, and the remaining six, including myself, went to one which is now kept by a Chinaman, but was formerly owned by a Frenchman. Here we managed to make ourselves pretty comfortable, and had the first good wash we had had since leaving Tientsing. After our wash, the weather being cold, we told the Chinese servants to light a fire, which they accordingly did.

After dinner we were all sitting round the fire, smoking and chatting, when we suddenly discovered that the floor was burning under our feet; the stupid servants, who could not speak any English, had lighted the fire without putting any fender down, and a lot of lighted

coals had got underneath the wooden floor, and it was beginning to blaze up. We could not get the servants to do anything, so we had to rush out into the yard ourselves to fetch buckets of water, with which we soon doused the conflagration, and found very little damage was done. I forgot to say that on our arrival we found that our party was the first to arrive, which we afterwards found was very lucky, or we should not have got any rooms at the hotels.

Wednesday, September 20th.

We did not turn out quite so early this morning, but by seven o'clock we were driving through the streets of Pekin, and after nearly an hour's drive proceeded out of the north gate of the city. We first arrived at the Ta-chung-sy, or "Great Bell Temple," which is about three miles from Pekin. In this temple there is a bell which is said to be the largest hung in existence, being nearly eighteen feet high, and fifteen feet in diameter. When this bell is struck, it is supposed to attract the attention of the rain-god, so that it is only done on occasions of drought. A story is told of some Europeans who were desirous of ringing

the bell, but were requested to desist by the priests, as they would bring down rain; they, however, let fly the battering-ram, which is used in place of a clapper, and immediately a sharp shower of rain came down, and the party had to acknowledge for once that Buddhism was triumphant. We, however, tried the same experiment, without any result. After spending a quarter of an hour here, we proceeded to Wan-shon, which is about ten miles from Pekin, and is the site of the Emperor's summer palace, which was thoroughly demolished by our troops, as a reminder to the Chinese that we had been to their capital once, and might do it again. The grounds round these ruins are very extensive, and it must have been a splendid place before it was demolished. From a hill in the middle a very good view of the surrounding country is obtained. We wasted more time here than we ought to have done, and instead of arriving at Hankon that night (which is the village at the foot of the pass up to the Great Wall), we only reached a town ten miles from it by sunset, and there we had to stop for the night.

Thursday, September 21st.

We had to start at one o'clock this morning, knowing that we had a hard day before us. Our road lay in the direction of the mountains which we had been approaching gradually every day. After going two or three miles the road began to get very stony and desolate. When about four miles from Hankon, we had to cross a small stream, and the second cart, which contained the marine officer, went by mistake down the wrong part of the bank, and got upset into the stream. Out jumped the marine officer, using the most terrible language at his poor driver, who could not understand a word he said. In the meantime all his bedding inside the cart was getting wet through; but we soon got the cart on its wheels again, amidst a good deal of laughter at the unfortunate marine officer, and went on again, arriving at Hankon about 10 a.m. Here we stopped for breakfast, after which we had to mount donkeys to proceed up the pass, as it is too rugged for carts to ascend. The donkeys were poor-looking beasts, and had very inferior saddles. I had to content myself with a sack of fodder, and no stirrups.

We began the ascent of the pass at about eleven o'clock, and very bad travelling we found it, but the scenery was very fine. Our troubles were greatly increased on account of an immense line of camels which were coming down the pass; they took up the best part of the road, and we had to get up the best way we could. We counted between two and three thousand of these camels, and a very curious sight it was to see them winding down the stony pass. They were fastened together by a string from the nose of one to the tail of the other, about six of them going together, the leading one of each six being led by a Mongolian.

The camels had large packs, one on each side; what they contained, I don't know, but I believe it was soda. After about two-thirds of the pass had been ascended, I found it impossible to sit on my donkey any longer, so I got off and walked the remainder of the way up. At about 3 p.m. we arrived in sight of the Great Wall of China, but had to go some miles further on after this, to get to the gate at the top of the pass, which we went through, so as to be able to say we had been in Mongolia; although some people say that

the real boundary-line between China and Mongolia is some hundred miles further north.

The wall is hardly worth description, as it was very much like any ordinary Chinese wall, only rather larger. Of course you know that the great wonder of it is its immense length, and the mountainous country it passes over. After a hasty meal of sandwiches we started back again, hoping to reach Hankon before dark. After going rather more than half-way back I got so tired of sitting on my donkey that I got off and determined to walk the rest of the way. When within four miles of our destination we were overtaken by the dark, and, as there was no moon, in a very short time we could hardly see a yard before us. At this time also we came across another string of camels, which were coming up the pass, and the trouble we had to find the way back I shall never forget. At last I got so dead tired that I was almost giving it up as a bad job. I did not know which way to go, or how far we were off; and as fast as I tried to go on I tumbled down between the stones which lined the pass all the way down. By this time I had also lost sight of the rest of

the party. But at last, to my great relief, I found my donkey and mounted again, while the donkey-boy led him over the stones. However, the road was so bad that we had to keep crossing the line of the camels, which were of course in the best part of the road, as usual; and at last my donkey got rather too near one of the camels, and I was caught underneath one of the packs, and down we came, rolling over the stones. But all things have an end, and at last I got back to the inn, and there I found I was not the last to arrive, as Dr. D. was still missing. However, he arrived shortly afterwards, and we sat down for our evening meal. I found I was too tired to eat, although as hungry as possible, and went off to sleep before we were half-way through dinner. I think this was the hardest day's work I ever had in my life, and I made up my mind that I would not go through it again to see fifty great walls.

Friday, September 22nd.

On waking this morning we found that the party from the Flying Squadron had arrived the night before on ponies. They had been unfortunate, as their food, which was coming

in a cart, had not arrived, and they had been without beds or food, except what they could get at the inn. However, we set them up with a breakfast from our stock, and left them on their way to the Great Wall. We started at 5 a.m., and after travelling about thirteen miles over a stony road we arrived at the Ming Tombs, which are the tombs of the Emperors of the Ming dynasty. We first went through a long line of immense stone figures—of camels, elephants, horses, and several other kinds of animals. There were two of each sort facing each other, and the road going between them. It was very amusing to see the fright of the mules at passing these images, and some of them dashed off the road and took the carts into the middle of the adjoining field. At the other end of the line of animals there were six figures, which, I suppose, represented the Emperors themselves. We then had to walk about a mile, until we came to a building at the foot of the mountains, which contained the tombs. We first entered an immense hall, the roof of which is supported by very large wooden pillars. Beyond this there was another hall, which contained the tombs, on

which there was some handsome carving in marble.

We left here about 10 a.m. and arrived in the evening at a temple, in which we lodged for the night. Adjoining this temple there is a building which was used as a palace by some of the Emperors, in the grounds of which there are some natural hot wells. There are two of them. They are nearly round, and are surrounded by handsomely-carved marble balustrades. The water was very hot, and you could see it bubbling up from a great depth. I believe there is some legend of a fiery serpent being at the bottom of these wells; and when the Chinaman who is in charge of the place saw that we were going to bathe in one of them, he advised us not, and said if we did we should die. However, we had a most delicious bath, and all felt greatly refreshed. As we intended to proceed to Pekin the next day, and knew that the Flying Squadron party would also get back there the same day, we thought it advisable to secure our rooms at the hotel; so we sent one of our servants in on a donkey, telling him to travel all night, and engage our rooms as soon as he could.

Saturday, September 23rd.

After another delicious bath we started off again at daylight, on our way to Pekin, which was about twenty miles distant. On our way we visited a Lamma Temple, in which there was a very handsome marble monument, which had been erected to one of the chief Lammas, who had died some time ago. We arrived at our hotel at about three o'clock in the afternoon, much to our relief, and dismissed our carts for good, as we should not require their services any longer. We found our boy at the hotel, with the keys of our rooms in his pocket, the Flying Squadron party having sent their boy in also to secure the same rooms. They arrived after us, and were very much annoyed to find themselves cut out. However, they contrived to get two rooms among the six of them, and soon managed to get over their annoyance. We heard from the legation that the Admiral did not intend going down to Tientsing until next Thursday, so that we had three or four days more than we expected left to enjoy ourselves.

Sunday, September 24th.

To-day we had a good rest, and did not

move until the afternoon. About three o'clock several of us went out and visited the Pekin observatory, which is situated at a corner of one of the walls of the Tartar city. This was built by some Jesuits a long time ago, and in it are some wonderful brass instruments, on grotesquely-carved stands, which were made under the direction of the Jesuits. The place is quite deserted now, as after the instruments were made the Chinese authorities turned the Jesuits out. In the evening I dined at the English legation, which is like a Chinese house from the outside, but contains some very handsome rooms.

Monday, September 25th.

This morning, directly after breakfast, we all started to visit the Temple of Heaven, which is situated in the Chinese city. Once every year the Emperor comes here to sacrifice at the altar of heaven. It is situated in the middle of a large park, which is thickly wooded. At one end of the building is the Secret Temple, in which the Emperor goes by himself, to meditate before sacrificing. The ornaments about the place were once very handsome; but, like everything else you see

now in China, they are all going to rack and ruin.

The present Government seems to be utterly careless as to what happens to any of the grand edifices which were built by their forefathers. Even the walls of Pekin, which are tumbling down in several places, are left two or three years before they are built up again. At the opposite end of the building is the altar of heaven, which is made of marble, and is surrounded by three terraces, with carved balustrades. On the top of this the Emperor sacrifices bullocks and sheep. Opposite to the Temple of Heaven is the Temple of Agriculture, where the Emperor next goes to turn the first sod. We did not go to see this, as there is nothing about it worth seeing.

Perhaps a short description of the city of Pekin would be interesting to you, although I am a very bad hand at describing anything. To begin, there is the Chinese city, which was the original city of Pekin. This is the most thickly-populated part, and here all the commercial business is transacted and all the shops are situated. This is in the shape of a rectangular parallelogram, and is surrounded by a wall. Next comes the Tartar city, the

south wall of which is the north wall of the Chinese city. This was built by the Tartars when they conquered China. This part does not seem to be nearly so thickly populated as the other, and always seems very quiet, as there is no work of any sort going on there. It contains chiefly the houses of mandarins, some of which are surrounded by large gardens, with plenty of trees in them. In the middle of the Tartar city is the Imperial city, which is also entirely surrounded by a wall. In this is the Emperor's palace and the houses of all the official people belonging to the city. There are therefore three cities in one, the shape of the whole being very nearly a square. There are no buildings of any height at all, and the only way you can get a good view of the place is by taking a walk upon one of the walls, which are very high, and from here it presents a very curious appearance. Having now seen all that was worth seeing in Pekin, some of us determined to return to Tientsing, as we thought we should be more comfortable there, while others preferred to remain where they were a little longer. Accordingly, after lunch this afternoon, two officers and myself started on

donkeys to ride to Tung-chow, which is about fifteen miles from Pekin, this being the place where the boats start from. We reached our destination about 6 p.m., after a very long ride, and found two boats ready for us. Two of us slept in one, and one in the other, in which the cooking was also done.

Tuesday, September 26th.

We slept very comfortably in the boats all night, and were hardly disturbed when they started at three o'clock in the morning. About 8 a.m. we got up and had breakfast, the two boats being lashed together when we wanted to communicate. The boats are allowed to drift down with the current, which runs pretty strong; and when the wind is favourable they set a sail, and the boats seem to fly down past the bank. We had not much to do except play whist and backgammon, which we did up to a pretty late hour one of the nights.

Wednesday, September 27th.

About eight o'clock this morning it began to blow, and in a short time a heavy gale was blowing from the north. It was bitterly

cold, and we soon got blown on to one of the banks of the river, and there we stuck for about six hours, when the wind fell again. This delay prevented us reaching Tientsing that night, as we expected, and we passed a bitterly cold night in the boats, finding ice about the decks next morning.

Thursday, September 28th.

We arrived at Tientsing at six o'clock this morning, and obtained rooms at one of the hotels. Here we had three most comfortable days, spending our time chiefly in riding and playing billiards and bowls. All the Flying Squadron party are here, and others are arriving daily from Pekin, so we have plenty of company. I found here two letters from you, one dated 3rd August and the other 10th August, in which you say you had at last received a letter from me. I am glad to hear you are all enjoying yourselves so much at Henley. As far as I am concerned, I would rather be enjoying the scenery of the dear old Thames than anything to be seen elsewhere. We left Tientsing on Sunday, 1st October, and arrived at Chee-foo the next day, and thus ended a trip which will never

be forgotten by any of us. The weather is very agreeable now. We shall probably stop here another fortnight, and then go to Nagasaki before going south.

We have seen the last of the Flying Squadron, as they have left here for Shanghai, and will probably go home very shortly.

HIRADO,
October 30th, 187—.

After great storms calm will come. So after the storming of Pekin by the officers of H.M.S. "A——," we have had a very quiet time for some weeks. After we arrived at Chee-foo the "V——" went down to Shanghai with the Admiral, and Captain C., and the other officers who had not been already to visit Pekin; so we had another three weeks at Chee-foo, during which time we had delightful weather, our chief amusement being boat-sailing. We left Chee-foo on 26th October on our way to Nagasaki. This morning we dropped anchor in Furuye Bay, which is in the island of Hirado, and after breakfast a large party of officers started off with guns, expecting to bring back large bags of pheasants. As it is my day for duty, I am

obliged to content myself with the view to be obtained from the ship, which is a most lovely one. We are in one of two small bays, which are entered by a common entrance, and then branch off in different directions. From our present position we seem completely land-locked, and the bay is so small that there is only just room for the ship to swing round her anchor. We are surrounded by low hills covered with variegated foliage, which now and then rise into a rocky peak studded with brushwood. Where there are no trees there are patches of cultivated ground, chiefly containing some plant of a bright-yellow colour, which, with the autumn tints of the trees, and a few picturesque little Japanese houses, make a truly beautiful scene. We have had a great many natives off to visit the ship, and they are greatly amused with everything they see. What pleases them most, is looking at themselves in the large looking-glass which hangs in our mess. We shall start again at five o'clock this evening, and arrive at Nagasaki early to-morrow morning. The sportsmen have come back with empty bags.

NAGASAKI TO AMOY,
November 25*th*, 187—.

I received your letter a few days ago. From what I have heard and read of the Eastern Question, I cannot help thinking that Dizzy and Lord Derby will turn out to be in the right. We are now on our way from Nagasaki to Amoy, and then on to Hong-Kong for the winter. We had a very jolly stay at Nagasaki, the climate being most enjoyable; our chief amusement was walking in the country, and I have come to the conclusion that Japan is the only place in the world which comes up to England for a real good country walk. The walks round Nagasaki are beautiful, and the views to be obtained from the surrounding hills are lovely. The Japanese country people are also very pleasant and interesting in their native dress, but a Europeanized Jap. is a most objectionable thing.

PART II.

AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, AND THE PACIFIC.

AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, AND THE PACIFIC.

SEA, MID CHANNEL,
Wednesday, July 31st, 187—.

MORE yachting! We have been having a most delightful cruise so far, and are now heading for Torquay, which we shall reach about two o'clock this afternoon. On Saturday last we slipped from the moorings at Sheerness and steamed close past the jetty of the dockyard, where there was a good assembly of people to see the pretty little "C——" off amidst waving of pocket-handkerchiefs and lifting of hats. We steamed down the Nore, passed Ramsgate and close to Deal, where we dropped the pilot; then on past Dover, which looked very imposing in the evening, with the sun shining on the old castle and pier. During the night we stood off the land under sail; and the next day, being Sunday, we still kept under sail, and

spent a pleasant day off Brighton, to the amusement of the "Sunday-outs," who came off in steamers to inspect us, the Jew element predominating. Brighton, also, looks very imposing on a bright day; and we were amused by making out all the old places which used to be familiar to us in our school-days. Mutton's shop seemed to be the one which left the most pleasant recollections. On Monday, up steam and off again for the Isle of Wight; weather still lovely. We reached Sandown Bay about eleven o'clock, and when some distance off could make out a multiplicity of tugs and lighters at work. We stood and shoved our nose right over the lighters that had the wreck of the "Eurydice" between them. We had a capital view of her, as she appeared half-lifted out of the water; the upper deck could be seen for the whole length, just as it was when she went down, and some flags hanging over the bridge-rails, which had evidently been put there to dry. Presently the Admiral, from Portsmouth, came steaming around the corner in his yacht, "and we left," as the Yankees say. From there we steamed on round the island and on to Portland Bill, when we again stood

off for the night. Yesterday we steamed on again as far as the Eddystone, and to-day we are making for Torquay against a pretty fresh breeze from the north with a choppy sea, in which the ship seems to behave very well. I hear we may reach Portsmouth on Saturday evening, but it is doubtful if there will be any leave.

Friday, August 23rd, 187—.

We are off to-morrow at daylight, calling at Plymouth, Madeira, Cape of Good Hope, and Australia.

Our programme roughly is as follows:—

Place.	Date of Arrival.	Length of Stay.	Date of Departure.	Length of Passage.
Plymouth...	Aug. 25th	1 day	Aug. 26th	10 days.
Madeira ...	Sept. 5th	4 days	Sept. 9th	25 „
Simon's Bay	Oct. 5th	16 „	Oct. 21st	30 „
Freemantle..	Nov. 20th	10 „	Nov. 30th	10 „
Adelaide ...	Dec. 10th	11 „	Dec. 21st	10 „
Sydney.....	Dec. 31st			

I dare say you can catch a mail to the Cape; but after that the best address would be "Australian Station." I hope you are having a pleasant trip; the summer has completely broken up here, and the weather is very unpleasant. I can hardly realize that we are off again to-morrow for two or three

years. When we are losing sight of the Lizard Lighthouse it will burst upon us, as if the string which held us had been cut with a sharp knife. I hope to see B. and H. at Madeira.

350 Miles from Madeira,
Sunday, Sept. 1st, 187—.

On Saturday, August 24th, we left Spithead at daylight and steamed down the Channel, the weather being too misty for us to go through the Needles, and continuing so the greater part of the day. About eight o'clock the same evening we anchored in Plymouth Sound, and I went on shore with Jack to have a last look at England. You must know that Jack is our junior doctor, and you may hear more of him hereafter. I shall call the other fellows by their nicknames, for shortness. Jack is a capital fellow, full of fun, with all his wits about him—a capital messmate. On Sunday, the 21st, we left Plymouth about 11 a.m., and steamed away from dear old England. The next day we continued steaming, with a heavy sea from the south-west; beginning to feel sea-sick. On Tuesday a regular sou'-wester set in, and

lasted till Thursday afternoon. All this time we were all very uncomfortable; myself especially, as I was dreadfully ill. The ship, however, behaved beautifully, contrasting very favourably with other ships of the same size, according to the experience of one or two of our fellows. We could not have had a better opportunity of testing her; and all think her the pattern of a seaworthy ship. On Thursday afternoon we made sail, and since then the weather has been gradually improving. We are now bowling along before the north-east trade, rapidly nearing Madeira. When we get there I will finish off this epistle and send it off with all despatch; but at present "I've something on my mind, father"—not cucumber—(*vide* Ingoldsby), which I will mention before I forget it. Before I left I heard that the house of the Junior N. and M. was in the market; so I conclude it is on its last legs, and would therefore like you, if there is no objection, to get one of your friends to put me down for the Junior U.S. I suppose my turn would probably come about the time I shall be coming home, so that I could take it then if I wanted to.

THE CRUISE OF THE "C——."
Autumn, 187—.

ABOUT 11 a.m. on Sunday, 25th August, 187—, H.M.S. "C——," the smartest little ship in her Majesty's service, started from Plymouth Sound, bound for Australia. You will observe I do not hesitate to name her the *smartest* ship afloat; and if throughout "our cruise" you find H.M.S. "C——" and her belongings praised a little too freely, you may put it down to the vanity of the writer, who, as being a small item among the said belongings, thinks thereby to enhance his own glory; but at all events we will err on the right side, and you will hear nothing that is not of the best. Well, as I said before, we left Plymouth Sound, and in the course of the afternoon said farewell to old England. With sad hearts most of us watched the land fading away in the distance; the married men, at all events, looking on our departure with unmitigated regret, and already talking of the time when the ship would be coming home again. For the first few days nothing could be got out of them but gloomy looks and short answers. Some

of us, perhaps, had more to look forward to in the new land than to regret in the old one, but they were no doubt the minority. Personally, although I shall miss so much in the old country, as you know, cousin, I had got over the "sweet sorrow" of parting sometime before we sailed, and had therefore fewer regrets at the last moment. But to my narrative. I had better begin by introducing to you the characters who will figure principally in our "life on the ocean wave." First and most important (as our welfare, both bodily and mentally, is in his hands) comes "Jim." Jim is a man somewhat below the average height, with short-clipped hair, beard, and whiskers, a pleasant countenance, with large straightforward eyes. His characteristics are cool determination, severity within the limits of justice when on duty, and a certain friendliness, accompanied by dry humour, when he joins the social circle to smoke a pipe, or when he ascends to the bridge to chat to the officer of the watch, thereby helping to while away a portion of his weary vigil. Next in order of seniority comes "Tommy," who is a smart officer on duty, and a pleasant *little* fellow

at other times (we are nearly all small), always ready for cricket, lawn tennis, or any other amusement, and always at home in the society of the fair sex.

You will see that I am not a "complete" letter-writer, as I am obliged to break off my summary of characters for an account of more active life. After leaving Plymouth we spent three very unpleasant days in the Bay of Biscay, in the midst of a sou'-wester. To give you an idea of sea life in a gale of wind, here follows an extract from my rough journal:—

"Thursday, August 29th.—When I went on deck at twelve o'clock to keep the middle watch, all the fellows in cabins were complaining that they could not get to sleep. All that appeared in N.'s cabin was a corpulent figure, enveloped in night-shirt, and illuminated by the flames of several candles. I discovered afterwards that he was trying to make a bed down on the deck; vain attempt to attract Morpheus. 'Jack' was also unhappy, as he had slung a hammock, thinking thereby to counteract the motion of the ship; but again vain hope! his hammock was slung the wrong way, and he explained

the sensation he was experiencing as 'being shot in and out like a telescope.' 'Jim' was also in a state of misery, when I went to report at four o'clock a.m., 'Barometer steady since twelve, sir.' Jim (*loq.*), 'Ah! thank you, B., that's more than the ship is.' However, after the third day we got a fair wind and went bowling away for Madeira, where we arrived on Tuesday evening, September 5th, about six o'clock." Great talk had been going on about an excursion up the grand curral; accordingly Jack, H., and myself started off for the shore shortly after the anchor was down, and put up at Mile's Hotel for the night. After having tea'd, and left orders for the morning excursion, we retired for a good night's rest. At 4.45 a.m. on Wednesday morning we were called, and, having donned our riding costumes, compared notes, and found that we had all spent rather a sleepless night; as during the first part of the night there was such a barking of dogs, and during the latter part such a crowing of cocks, that one who was not accustomed to it might as well have tried to sleep in the middle of a cattle-show. In each case there seemed to be one, either beast or

bird, who took the lead, all the rest being in comparison minor performers in the orchestra; more especially the leading cock, who kept up his cock-a-doodle-do incessantly, without any intermission, insomuch that some one remarked that he had to adapt the pitch of his voice to allow for the constant strain on the bronchial organs, and was consequently easily discernible from the rest. Having breakfasted off coffee, toast, and eggs, we mounted our steeds and started for the hills. The horses were not at all bad animals to go; as, in spite of the steepness and roughness of the road, it was all to them as the smoothest downs to an English horse. The morning was perfection—the first really clear day they had experienced for some weeks—the mountain air fresh, and most of the road in shadow, the sun being yet low. As we carolled along we had lots of fun. In our exuberance of spirits we got a little childish perhaps, assuming the names *pro tem.* of "Dr. Livingstone," "Baker Pasha," and "Mr. Stanley;" and although we were in company, "Baker Pasha" was ascending the Shipka Pass, "Livingstone" was looking for the source of the Nile, and "Stanley" was

somehow mixed up with *Punch* and the "keep it dark" continent. The road for some part of the way went near the bed of a stream, and we had not much difficulty in finding a resemblance to the "Tapcock Falls" (*vide Punch*) in some portion of it. A little further on we came across an old copper-coloured wood-cutter with white whiskers, who was immediately hailed with "Mr. Gladstone, I presume." But he did not seem flattered.

Soon after starting we came to the conclusion that the proverbial name of "John" was not good enough for our chief guide, so Jack christened him "Henri," pronounced with an exaggerated French accent. It was all the same to him, like Ferguson in "The Innocents Abroad."

The succession of glorious views that burst upon us again and again, as we rounded the corners of our winding path, were worth anything to see. First we were looking up at the hills above, now all enveloped in shadow; then as we ascended we could see as far as the eye could reach over the ocean, with a hazy mist hanging over the distant horizon, topped by a bank of eider-down clouds, and just clear of the eastern end

of the island, the long but high-backed Desertas appeared looming in the blue distance.

Again we would enter a long ravine, along which the path took us, and it was generally noticeable that one side was covered with short vegetation, while the other was bare rock. Sometimes we rode underneath the most luxuriant hanging vines, trained to creep across the road on frames. When within about half an hour's walk of the top, the path became so rough that we thought it advisable to spare the horses. We accordingly left them and proceeded on foot, being provided with a kind of alpenstock by the men who looked after some goats, pigs, and sheep. We found one goat which had just fallen down a steep incline, and met with his death by this, to these animals, unusual method, as they seem capable of climbing about the rocks like flies on a wall. "Jack" would not be content without its horns, which he took off with a pocket-saw. Our path for the last hundred yards was nearly perpendicular, and as the sun was now getting warm, we found it rather trying. "Jack," who is a little rotund, was being dragged up by two shepherds, and as

he had been christened "Baker Pasha" at starting we told him that he was making a very poor show of storming the Shipka Pass.

However, when we got to the top we were amply repaid by the view, which we enjoyed with a small drop of mountain dew and a pipe. We were not on the highest peak, but could see enough to satisfy the greatest lover of scenery a long time; and when our guide beckoned us to come a little further, saying, "Bona vista, signor," Jack replied, "No; we have had enough vista for one day already." In front of us was the grand curral, a valley some thousand feet below us, completely surrounded by rugged hills; a little convent and a few huts, partially hidden by trees, at the bottom. On the far side the circle of the hills was broken by a ravine, the entrance of which could only be seen; the shadow cast by the sharp ledge on the one side was carried half-way up on the other in such a way that one could hardly perceive where the ledge ended and the shadow began, except by a beautiful blue outline, which the shadow seemed to vanish into. At our back was the view down hill, with the town of

Funchal and the boundless ocean. On the way down I collected some ferns from a watery grotto, and a lot of flowers, which I got through the kindness of the people, principally the most beautiful double geraniums, which grow in the utmost profusion, although hardly cultivated at all. In the same way the fruit, which grows in any quantity, is much spoilt for want of care, the peaches especially never ripening enough to be eaten by any one but the natives without cooking. By the time we arrived at the hotel we were pretty tired, but soon revived again after a good breakfast. I do not think you know the B.'s very well; but one of them is here with his poor wife, who is seriously ill of consumption. I spent the afternoon at their quinta, or villa, which is a mile above the town. As is usual in these cases the poor invalid seemed particularly sweet and nice, which made it seem all the more sad, although for a time she was cheerful and lively. We quitted Madeira early next morning, bound for the Cape of Good Hope, our next port of call. I never felt so sorry to leave any foreign port before, as I could not help thinking of the sad

party I was leaving behind, "waiting for death."

SIMON'S BAY,
October 25th, 187—.

I last wrote from Madeira, which place we left at nine o'clock the next morning, *en route* for the Cape. We had a good voyage on the whole, but came in for some rough weather about five days from here, when we were very uncomfortable for a short time, and nearly lost a man who fell overboard; but we luckily managed to pick him up, though there was a very heavy sea. We arrived here about ten o'clock on Sunday the 20th. Since then I have been enjoying myself so much that I really don't know how I shall return to the routine of duty again. I dare say you remember that Miss W. kindly gave me some letters of introduction before we left, two of which I made use of on our arrival. One was to a Mrs. V., the wife of one of the Dutch merchants here; the other was to Lady F., at Government House. On Monday I drove up to Wynberg, which is fifteen miles from here on the way to Cape Town, and called on Mrs. V., who was

very kind and asked me to dinner the next day. The country around Wynberg is very pretty; the road passes through a thickly-wooded country, with quaint, old, Dutch houses, surrounded by gardens, and inhabited by the most charming young ladies, who endeavour to captivate the hearts of the too susceptible naval officer while playing the noble game of lawn tennis or reeling in the mazy dance. After calling on the V.'s, and playing lawn tennis at another house, I went on to Cape Town in the evening. The next day I called on Lady F., who very kindly asked me to stay with them for a day or two. They are a very pleasant family. Lady F. was extremely kind, and seemed to fulfil the duties of his Excellency's wife with great tact. His Excellency himself is up country, trying to settle some little difference with the Kaffirs. The Misses F. are pleasant companions; they are all clever, and converse well on any subject. On Wednesday the officers of an American ship lying in Table Bay came to lunch, and caused some amusement. In the course of conversation an excursion up Table Mountain was mentioned, and one of the officers was asked

if he would like to go up; to which he replied, "Guess I'll wait to go up Table Mountain till there is a tunnel underneath and an elevator up the middle." In the evening there was a ball at the Royal Exchange, given by the merchants of Cape Town; it was a great success, and we kept it up till three o'clock in the morning. On Friday I visited the Observatory, in company with two of the young ladies. The astronomer is a man of the name of Stone, who has made himself a name by his researches in the vaults of heaven, and, they say, is the future Astronomer Royal. He very kindly showed us all his instruments; among others a photoheliograph, for taking pictures of the sun. On Friday we had a dance at Government House, where there is a splendid ball-room with a beautiful floor. On Saturday I rode over to Wynberg to play in a cricket-match, for which we had a lovely day and a very pretty little ground. In the evening we went to a concert, at which a good deal of talent was exhibited. To-day I have returned to the ship, having spent, as you will see, a very pleasant week; what with dancing, lawn tennis, cricket, and riding, my time has been

fully employed. I received your letter on our arrival, and was glad to hear good news. We sail next Thursday for Freemantle.

OFF SYDNEY.

Some one has remarked that "life is not all beer and skittles." In my last letter I held forth chiefly on the consumption of that wholesome beverage and the playing of the said merry game; this one will deal more with the brimstone and treacle of life, for the former, in the shape of wind, and the latter, in the shape of rain, have been dealt out to us in pretty large spoonfuls for the last six weeks. They say we are going to Paradise, but it is a rocky road to travel. We left Simon's Bay on November 2nd and arrived at Freemantle on December 2nd. This is the port to Perth, the capital of Western Australia, and although the part first colonized, it is far behind the others now, and therefore did not give us a favourable impression of the great continent. We found a telegram waiting to say we were to proceed to Sydney at once, leaving out Adelaide, which was on our former pro-

gramme; so we left again the same day, and are now steaming hard for that port, where we expect to arrive this evening (December 16th).

At Sydney,
December 20th.

We have now been here four days. Sydney is certainly the finest port I have ever seen; the view as you steam up to the anchorage is lovely; to quote from an article in the *Westminster Review*, it is "a city of fair streets and gardens on the shores of the fairest haven of the earth." We are anchored in Farm Cove, just underneath the Governor's house.

All the ships of the station are now here, the "W——," "S——," and "N——;" the "S——" having left yesterday on being relieved by us. I think we shall find it a very pleasant place; at present it is the summer season and rather hot, so there is not so much going on as at other times. I called on B. at his office the other day, and am going out to his place to lunch to-morrow; he seems a very nice fellow. I dined yesterday with some people to whom H. E. had

given me an introduction; they are a hospitable family and very musical, which suits me. To-day I have been playing lawn tennis at Government House; here again the people are very hospitable and pleasant, and always pleased to see naval officers; Captain and Mrs. B. are staying with them at present. We are settled here for about a month at all events, but at present do not know what our next move will be. I have not found any letter from you, but hope to get one by the next mail. It will be some time since you last heard from me when this arrives, but I am afraid our mails will always be rather irregular out here, as some of the places are rather out of the way, but you may be sure I shall write at every opportunity.

SYDNEY,
January 20th, 187—.

I was very glad to receive good news in your long letter of November 7th. Bertie's letter arrived by the same mail, and was full of fun.

Arthur's account of Oxford is very amusing. He does not say that his fellow-lodger played "Nancy Lee," but I take it for granted he

did. That enchanting song is just in full swing out here, so we have to go through all the agony of listening to it again.

We have now been in Sydney a month, and certainly think it a very nice place. The merry-go-round of gaiety never ceases; in fact now and then I am obliged to pause and take a quiet day away from lawn tennis and dancing, in order to keep in my sober senses. The English eleven will be here next week, and we think of playing them with twenty-two of the army and navy, more as a sort of reception and luncheon party than for the sake of the cricket. It is to be a one-day match, and we are going to stipulate for first innings.

It is not settled when we are to leave Sydney, but we are ready to go at any moment if there is a disturbance among the islands, though the Commodore —— says he will keep us here as long as he can. If nothing occurs for the present, we shall probably go over to New Zealand with Sir H. R. next month, when he will take on the Government of Wellington. Affairs seem to be progressing very favourably in Afghanistan according to the telegrams

received here. There has been great excitement here lately on the Chinese question; at one time a riot was expected, but quiet has been restored. Strikes are however going on everywhere, and ordinary labourers here get just double my pay, and yet they are continually striking for more. People all come here with the idea of making money quickly, and nothing steady suits them. The servants are the most independent lot. They say that if a lady wishes to give a dinner she has to consult her cook as to what day will be convenient to her; and the other servants are continually leaving without any notice, sometimes coming back after a short holiday.

SYDNEY,
January, 187—.

It was with great pleasure that I received your charming letter the other day, and also the Christmas cards, which were simply lovely. I had quite given up the idea of getting any, when yours came to remind me of the many happy Christmases spent at home in former days. They keep up Christmas here with great show; but it seems very odd,

eating plum-pudding and wishing your friends a merry Christmas in broiling hot weather.

And now I feel that I might fill sheets about the beauties of Sydney Harbour. It certainly is a lovely haven, completely land-locked, stretching about fifteen miles inland, and generally about a mile in width, with the most enchanting little wooded headlands jutting out on either side, and between them the most beautiful little coves and inlets branching away in every direction,—all fitted for picnics by night or day,—and along the rocks they say a thousand miles of delicious oysters, equal to the best English natives. which you have only to land and knock off with a stone, and eat till you are satisfied. Then on either side, for several miles, the headlands are covered with beautiful villas, with pretty gardens attached, full of pretty flowers and fruit, and generally a ball-room, with a specially-prepared floor for dancing. The bay the men-of-war lie in is called "Farm Cove." Just above us, on one of the rounding points, is the Government House. It is a fine building, with hospitable inmates, and a profusely-flowered garden, with a very good lawn-tennis ground, which we

play on by ourselves in the morning; and in the evening there are generally some fair damsels to help us, or for us to help, perhaps. Then stretching round the banks of the cove are the finest botanical gardens I have seen anywhere, kept in perfect order, prettily laid out, and with a collection of rare plants and flowers growing in the utmost profusion. The scent from the flowers is continually wafted off to the ship, and is very refreshing to the weary mariner just released from the toils of the sea. Yesterday I went a trip up the harbour, to play in a cricket-match at a lunatic asylum, about seven miles above Sydney. The harbour seemed to get more beautiful, if possible, as we advanced, until, on our arrival at Gladsville, the culminating point was reached.

Here the asylum is situated, on the rising shores of the harbour, and surrounded by grounds most tastefully laid out, with the usual display of flowers and fruit, and also vineries and orange-groves. The cricket-ground was small, but good and prettily situated. All the lunatics who could be trusted were allowed on the ground to see the fun; and very amusing they were, taking

great interest in the game, and making the most amusing remarks on the play. We took a band from the fleet up with us, and some of them danced away in a corner of the ground, and seemed to enjoy themselves immensely.

One very old man especially, who said he was "Peter and Paul," skipped away as merrily as possible, and seemed as if he could never be unhappy. I was almost inclined to become a lunatic myself. However, during a pause in the game, I went round the wards, and there we saw patients in all stages, some of them very pitiable objects. But it was altogether very interesting, and we had a very pleasant day.

And now I must wind up this long yarn, hoping it may interest you a little. "The manners and customs of ye people" must wait for another occasion.

POSTED AT NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA,
April 8th, 187—.

I promised in my last letter to continue my account of the manners and customs of our Sydney friends.

We are now three days out from that

place, for the last two of which we have been receiving the spiteful wrath of the stormy elements, as if to remind us we do not always live on a bed of roses. The proverbial calm has succeeded the storm. It is now a hot sunny afternoon, with a gentle breeze helping us on our way to New Guinea. I am on watch, with little to trouble me; so let us take a peep into the past few months together.

In the first place, before leaving England, we had received such glowing accounts of Australia in general, and of Sydney in particular, that, as is nearly always the case in similar circumstances, we were rather liable to be disappointed in the realization of our expectations; so you must not be surprised if my account is not all to the honour and glory of the Sydneyites.

To begin with the best. There are three or four old-established families who, not deficient in wealth, and living in large and comfortably-furnished houses, with pleasant grounds attached, keep open house, give numerous entertainments, and are always ready to welcome a stranger, situated as we are, into their social circle, where he is treated

in such a manner as to make him feel quite at home.

The sons of these families are gentlemanly fellows and pleasant companions; the daughters, ladylike and sociable.

They always keep up a connection with the old country; in some cases the rising generation being sent home to begin their education, in others only to finish it.

* * * *

Then there is a class which corresponds in Sydney to the country cousins in London. It consists of the families of rich squatters, who live up the country on their farms—or more properly runs—their stock-in-trade being sheep, which are bred for their wool—and come to town occasionally with a lot of money, to have a little excitement.

Among these there are some worthy people. Their hospitality to any one travelling in their neighbourhood is proverbial, it being a necessity of life in the bush that open house should be kept for mutual assistance. A great many of them are enormously rich. Wouldn't you be surprised if I were to come home with 50,000*l.* and a squatter's daughter, "fat, fair, and forty"? Last, but not least,

come the "Larrikins," most expressive of names, of course corresponding with our roughs, though I think the latter would consider the former very bad mannered. They consist of the scum of the male passengers who come out in the emigrant-ships, who land in Sydney with one idea—that they have come to a free country, where they can do what they like. The wages of a common labourer are ten shillings per day, or just double my pay. This some of them work for regularly; others only do odd jobs, at the same exorbitant rate of hire, and when they have a little money in their pockets become independent gentlemen for the time, lounging about at the corners of streets, drinking and smoking, as if they were born for it, until their money is gone, when they seek another job. These free and enlightened members of society are always ready for a disturbance on the slightest pretext. You cannot cross Hyde Park after dark without a chance of being knocked down and robbed. Poor, inoffensive Chinamen—quiet, unpretending, and industrious—are continually being assaulted and abused by them; and to crown all, by way of showing their perfect

right to have a voice in social affairs, and to see justice done to their colony, witness their brutal mobbing of Lord Harris's eleven on the cricket-ground, of which no doubt you have seen an account in the papers.

SYDNEY,
February 2nd, 187—.

I received your letter dated December 11th yesterday, and was very glad to hear good accounts of every one. I hope you are getting through the cold weather better than you did last year. Freddy seems to have stepped into his regiment at just the right time. Arthur's account of Oxford life sounds very pleasant; I always regret having missed it myself, but we cannot have everything. The life has been a little quieter lately, as when the hot weather comes on a great many people seek cooler climes, some going down to Tasmania, and some going to the mountains a little way inland. The English cricketers were unfortunately beaten by Sydney with five wickets to spare, though the match was a very good one, lasting four days, and causing a great deal of interest. The next day we played them with twenty-

two of the army and navy, and had a very pleasant day's outing; we played on a private ground, so that only our own friends were admitted, and skylarking was more the order of the day than real cricket; however, we made 157 runs, while they made 160 with the loss of four wickets. They are now up at Bathurst, where they have easily beaten eighteen of that district; they return here on Tuesday, and on Wednesday there will be a ball on board the flagship in their honour. There is to be a fancy-dress ball on the 19th, given by the Mayor of Sydney; there are said to be 1500 invitations; however, we shall miss the fun, as we sail on Friday next for the South Sea Islands. They are getting on very rapidly with the Exhibition buildings here; it should be a success, as all nations are going to contribute. It is to be opened next September, when I hope we shall be back again to assist in the ceremony.

At Sea,
March 7th, 187—.

My letters to you often seem to begin with a grievance. The present one—thermometer at 90° F. without the slightest chance of its

going below 80° F. for the next three or four months.

The reason may be stated in few words. Certain heedless adventurers, who have failed to settle down to any healthy occupation in life, have as a last resource taken to trading with the South Sea Islanders. For a time all goes well; exchanges are made, feasts partaken of, the pipe of peace smoked; but such is the power of love that in course of time one of our traders loses his heart to a wife of the king, whose hospitality he has been receiving. His sable majesty naturally resents this, and administering justice after his own lights cuts our adventurer up into small pieces and eats him. Then the enlightened colonists, hearing of the murder of one of Britain's free-born subjects while trading peacefully with the natives, take to their pens, and pour forth their righteous indignation in streams of flowing ink. Then a sacrifice has to be offered up to calm the public pulse. *We* are that sacrifice.

Our first point of call should have been Port Moresby, a native village on the coast of New Guinea; but having experienced light winds since our departure from Sydney, and

our time being limited, we have come instead to the scene of the missing individual No. 1. I must tell you the only information we have to go on in these cases is taken from some letters in the *Cooktown Herald.*

Early yesterday morning we sighted the highest peaks of the Owen Stanley range, at a distance of over 100 miles, losing sight of them again as the sun rose. To-day we have been picking our way among the coral reefs, which form a barrier all along the coast, and, rising here and there from out the depths of the ocean, give their name to this part of the sea. It is necessary to proceed very cautiously, as very little has been done in the way of surveying in these regions.

About 2 p.m. we found an entrance through the reef, which runs along at a distance of about ten miles from the shore, the top of it being just on a level with the water-line, and all that is visible to the eye is a long line of white breakers. Feeling our way, with our boat ahead of the ship taking soundings, we proceeded along the inside of the reef to the eastward, our object being to reach Cloudy Bay, which we knew to be about twenty miles off in that direction. At

six o'clock, the water getting shallow, we dropped anchor for the night, our intention being to send on the steam-cutter to-morrow, to make inquiries into the fate of a Mr. J., who lost his life here. We are about three miles from the shore. About thirty miles inward is a lofty range of mountains, named after a Captain Owen Stanley who once visited these parts, the highest peak being 11,000 feet above the sea level. The country is flat right up to the foot of the mountain, and densely wooded right down to the water's edge. Here and there we can see small clusters of native huts among the trees, apparently of a very primitive order of architecture. Soon after we had anchored four natives came off in a canoe made out of two trees hollowed out and bound together by planks stretched across the tops; they were fine-looking fellows, with frizzly heads of hair and no clothing, their heads and bodies decorated with a few bone ornaments. They apparently brought us an invitation to go on shore, but, not wishing to be eaten just yet, we declined with thanks; neither would all our inducements, held out in the shape of old bottles, pieces of coloured cloth, &c., cause

them to come within fifty yards of the ship, and when they heard the bugle sound they beat a hasty retreat.

March 8th.

At seven o'clock this morning Tommy and Jack went away in the steam-cutter, with four blue-jackets, and a like number of marines armed to the teeth, and also a plentiful supply of provender, to make inquiries for Mr. J. in Cloudy Bay; however, after going about fifteen miles along the coast and visiting two villages, they came back about seven in the evening, without having discovered anything, as the natives denied ever having seen Mr. J., and indeed seemed never to have seen a white man before. The *Cooktown Herald* would have you believe that they are a savage and barbarous tribe, dangerous to approach; but, on the contrary, they seemed very peaceably inclined, and did not show any implements of warfare of any kind.

Sunday, March 9th.

We left Cloudy Bay at daylight this morning, and are now on our way to Dinner Island.

Tuesday, March 11th.

We arrived off Dinner Island at eight o'clock this morning. A lovely spot, an island among islands, about a quarter of a mile in length, and situate at the entrance of the China Strait, which separates the eastern end of New Guinea from the Louisiade Archipelago. These islands are all of the same description, rising abruptly from the water's edge into thickly-wooded heights, covered with the vegetation of tropical regions, surrounded by the pale-blue ocean, rarely ruffled by anything but the gentlest breeze, with the sky overhead of a slightly paler blue than the ocean, dotted here and there with fleecy clouds—the whole forming to the eye the poetry of nature; but, as is the case with the cities of the east, better seen only externally. As the latter when approached too closely are found to contain only poverty, badly-paved streets, and countless odours, so the former are the harbour of thorns, creeping insects, and stagnant swamps. At Dinner Island is a missionary station, at which we expected to find the Rev. Mr. M., who was supposed to

afford us some necessary information; but we found he had gone to Sydney. However, in his place we found "Tom the teacher," a converted native; and also living on the island an Englishman, named W., engaged in the bêche-de-mer trade, who answered our purpose equally well. Hearing that we should remain here two days to take in a supply of wood and water, a party of four, including Jack and myself, determined to pay a visit to the mainland, distant about two miles, in search of sport. We first landed on the island to see if we could get a guide, and luckily fell in with "Jimmy Caledonia," who, we were informed by W., in whose service he is at present, is a well-known character, a native of New Caledonia. Ever since a boy he has been going backward and forward among the islands, acting as guide and servant to different Europeans. His appearance at first sight was not prepossessing, for ugly as an imp of darkness, and with only one eye, covered with scars, his skin like the gnarled trunk of a tree, he had evidently seen hard service; but withal, upon closer inspection, there was a look of honesty about his battered features, which

made you begin to think better of him. Jimmy was quite ready to accompany us in our excursion, and we soon found that, a man of few words, his forte lay in deeds, and also that his one eye was worth two of any ordinary person's.

Having laid in a stock of cocoa-nuts to refresh us on our way, we started under easy sail, as it was yet too hot for much exertion. In about an hour we reached a sandy spot in a sandy bay, where we landed, Jimmy asserting that he had seen a hornbill there in the morning. We found it very rough, walking through mangrove-swamps and thorny undergrowth, and the trees were such a height that although we actually saw several hornbills sailing over their tops, they were out of reach of our guns. Finding this was no go, Jimmy took us a little further on in our boat, and we soon found the entrance to a narrow creek, which was almost hidden by the trees; this we paddled up, hoping that the birds would be foolish enough to fly across from one bank to another within reach of our guns. The scenery up here was very pretty; a narrow creek, nowhere more than a dozen yards wide, winding for about two miles around

the base of hills covered with vegetation, the boughs of the mangrove-trees hanging down over the water on both sides, the banks formed entirely of the roots of the said trees, which spread out in every direction above the earth, assuming all sorts of fantastic shapes. On all sides of us we could hear the cries of all kinds of different birds, though the foliage was so thick that we could seldom see them. Jimmy could tell each different kind of bird by its pipe; the commonest seemed to be the leatherhead; also different sorts of parrots and cockatoos, now and then a bird of paradise, and also some beautiful green pigeons. Coming in course of time to the head of the creek without having bagged any game, we decided to sit down and smoke a bit until the day got cooler. As the sun went down the birds seemed to grow more lively, so we started off again through a mangrove-swamp. Soon the one eye of the indefatigable Jimmy began to detect the feathered denizens of the forest perched among the upper branches of the trees, and we could see them flitting about from one branch to the other. Presently a huge cockatoo was brought to bag, and shortly after a

beautifully-coloured parrot, which Jimmy, who has lately been travelling with a naturalist named Goldie, affirmed was a new species, only recently discovered by Mr. Goldie on this island. We were very anxious to get some birds of paradise, but although we saw one or two we could not get within gun-shot of them.

Wednesday, March 12th.

This morning we had the novel excitement of seeing a fleet of war-canoes returning from the fight. I must tell you that the native population of New Guinea and the surrounding islets is divided into innumerable petty tribes, owing allegiance to nobody, and living on the sea-coast and in the islands (there is said to be an entirely different race in the interior, more allied to the ape than to man); they live from hand to mouth, on such fish as they can catch, and such food as they can gather from the forest, chiefly cocoa-nuts, yams, and another root called the taro. Their only diversion is fighting with one another, the cause being sometimes want of food, when they eat their victims; sometimes a sort of annual jubilee, like St.

Patrick's Day in Ireland, only instead of cracking your neighbour's skull, they sally forth tribe against tribe.

Upon our arrival at Dinner Island we heard that the natives of Heath Island had started the night before to wreak vengeance on a tribe situated on the mainland for killing three of their men. We were also glad to hear that before starting they had consulted "Tom the teacher" as to what they should do with their slaughtered enemies, and had promised to take his advice, and throw them into the sea instead of eating them. Early this morning they were seen returning, and seeing us lying at anchor came swarming around the ship, shouting and yelling with wonder. There were about twenty canoes, each holding from thirty to forty men, both the boats and their occupants being painted with lime, to look as hideous as possible. The canoes are formed of two long logs of wood, one hollowed out and large, the other smaller, but solid, and of sufficient weight to balance the former. Across these supports are placed, which also answer the purpose of seats; at one end a sort of bow is built on, generally in the shape of a bird's beak. The men sit

in the hollow log in single file, each one having a paddle for propelling the boat, and armed with a wooden spear, or hatchet made of stone or hoop-iron obtained from European ships. We were soon offering them pieces of red cloth, beads, knives, &c., in exchange for their spears, hatchets, and ornaments. I contented myself with a nose-bone and a bracelet; the former a bone of some fish, which is worn through the nose, and the latter made of a shell. Only one or two had the courage to venture on board; and as they were being shown all the different wonders, it was amusing to hear them express their surprise and delight by a long shrill cry, ending with a guttural sound.

Friday, March 14th.

We arrived this evening off Brooker Island, the scene of massacre No. 2, the victim being a certain Mr. K., who came here in a steamer manned by some natives of an island in the Torres Straits, who, without any apparent reason, murdered Mr. K., destroyed the steamer, and, appropriating the arms and ammunition, bade defiance to all white men, and said that they would take the

first man-of-war that came. Having brought W. and Jimmy from Dinner Island with us, we sent them on shore as soon as the ship was anchored, to gain what information they could. Jimmy seemed to think that they would shoot him, and it took several doses of alcohol to bring him up to the necessary pitch of pluck. After about an hour they came off again with the following account of their proceedings. Upon landing they could not at first see any one about; there was a small village of huts, one of which they could see was roofed with the sails of K.'s boat,—all apparently tenantless. W. then sent one of his boys up a tree to get some cocoa-nuts, but he had not proceeded very far before the bushes suddenly became alive with men, and out stepped two or three of the Torres Straits' men, with their rifles at the present. Jimmy, however, was by this time ready for any emergency, and recognizing one of the murderers exclaimed, "Now you, Smoke, put down that gun. I no want to kill you; you no want to kill me." A parley then ensued, W. telling them that we were a missionary steamer, come to "talkee good." However,

they were suspicious, and would not give any information concerning K.

Friday, March 19th.

We arrived this morning at Savo, a small island in the Solomon group, here to make more inquiries; periodically a man-of-war is sent up to make inquiries; more than that is never done. In the present instance, for all the half-dozen murders we have inquired into, all we have to show is one old boot, belonging to Mr. I. deceased. It is to be hoped he has an old mother, whose solace it may be for the loss of her son; then we may say we have indeed endured all these melting days for the benefit of some one. But to return to Savo. We now find ourselves in a region where more intercourse with the white man has begun to fill the black man with the superior ideas of civilization; many of them can talk broken English, and all of them are too enlightened to be taken in with our articles of trade. Behold another farce! Here are we calling these fellows savages and niggers, thereby implying that they are every way inferior to ourselves, palming off upon them, in exchange

for valuables, birds, and curiosities, knives which will not cut, hatchets which at the first blow will break off at the handle, tobacco that will not smoke, and small portions of navy cloth at about three farthings a yard. We are disappointed then to find that these fellows know too much; they actually want money, and even gunpowder, for their goods. We had not been long here before a good many natives came on board, several of whom had been to Sydney, Fiji, and other places; their contact with Europeans, however, whatever else it may have done for them, had not given them a taste for much wearing-apparel, for although they adopt a shirt and trousers while away, they are put by for holiday occasions on their return. I observed one fellow strutting about in a pair of trousers with a red stripe down one side and blue on the other, which had belonged to one of our Christy Minstrels; but the next morning he came off with them festooned around his neck, and seemed to find it much more comfortable. We had two chiefs on board, who, although they did not seem to have much authority over their own subjects, who jostled

them about indiscriminately, appeared to presume on their rank in their dealings with us; but as we had information to gain from them, of course they had to be humoured. Upon hearing the boatswain's mate pipe to dinner at noon, one chief said to the captain, "I think I know that pipe." "Yes; that means dinner," said the captain. "Well, I should like some dinner, too." So in about five minutes' time the two chiefs and their retainers were squatted around a tarpaulin, making great inroads into some pea-soup and ships' biscuits. This being over, the chief speaks up again, "Captain, want smoke." So clay pipes and tobacco were provided; they all smoke, from the little piccaninny up to the sage of the village, ladies included. The last scene of the above has for its background his majesty at full length on the quarter-deck, with his head on a ring-bolt, snoring quite unconscious of the busy hum around him. And now I must close this rambling epistle (and if you read it to the end I shall be well pleased), as we are approaching Noumea, where it will have to be posted. Again let me tell you that you must not be surprised at my letters being

few and far between, as now it is merely by chance, the want of coal, that we are to call at a civilized port. From this we proceed to Fiji, there to meet the commodore, after which we may retrace our steps with him, or, I trust, be allowed to proceed to healthier regions, perhaps New Zealand or Sydney. I hope we shall get an English mail or two, as by then it will be three months since I have had news of you.

LEVUKA, FIJI,
April 28th, 187—.

We left Noumea on Thursday, April 10th, and arrived at Levuka on the 19th. This is the seat of the English Government in Fiji, and is situated on a small island named Ovalau. We expected to find the flagship here with Commodore W., when we should have learnt our future movements, and also got our mails. But we were doomed to be still left in a state of uncertainty as to the future, as she had not arrived.

An uncertain future is bearable; but although I am not given to qualms generally, it is now two months and a half since I last heard from home, which is weary waiting

We were not long left inactive, as just before we arrived a great chief had died, second only in importance to King Cacabau (pronounced Thackabow). It was politically necessary that he should be buried in state, and also advisable that affairs should be settled as to his successor, in order to prevent a disturbance among the surrounding chiefs; so on Wednesday morning at daylight we started, with the lieutenant-governor and King Cacabau and suite, for the island of Taviuni, distant about eighty miles, where the body was lying preserved in sandal-wood.

Cacabau is now a very infirm old man; he has two sons, one of whom we call the "Prince of Wales," and the other the "Duke of Edinburgh," or more familiarly "Joe," his proper name being Joseph. "Joe" has been to Sydney, and speaks English remarkably well; he seems a very intelligent fellow. H.R.H. is a fine fellow, below the middle height, but stout, and strongly built. He does not, however, inspire one with confidence, as his expression suggests the idea that white man's flesh is very good, and he was sorry that circumstances over which he had no control had forced him to give it up.

I find it impossible to finish an account of this trip before the mail goes, so think it better to send it without, as I cannot tell when we shall catch another mail. We are off for Torres Straits, to fetch Sir A. G. from there here—a very hot, long, unpleasant journey. It is curious I should have chosen this station for a cool and healthy climate, and find myself fixed in the tropics for so long. Our only hope is that next year we may be better off in New Zealand or Tasmania. I have just received your two letters of 30th January and 27th February. The news of poor cousin Charles's death was a real blow —one of the earliest and best friends of our childhood ; many tender associations will be attached to his memory. I was particularly glad to hear good news as to your health, as the winter has been so severe.

COOKTOWN, QUEENSLAND,
May 22nd, 187—.

I had to leave off my last letter without finishing the account of a trip to Taviuni. I think I had just told you about Cacabau and his sons. The other members of our party not belonging to the ship were—the lieutenant-

governor, the colonial secretary, and the consul for Tonga, now acting private secretary to the lieutenant-governor. The chief we went to bury had been a very powerful man, and, it seems, was feared and liked in about equal proportions—feared by his own subjects, towards whom he is said to have been a hard master and a heavy levier of taxes; feared by our government, as the most likely man to head a rebellion of the native population against our rule; but liked by everybody who had personal intercourse with him in a friendly way for his liberality and open-heartedness. He was evidently a man of parts.

We arrived at Somo-Somo, a small village on Taviuni, soon after dark on the day of our departure from Levuka; but, as nothing could be done till the morrow, amused ourselves with "poker," a harmless game when the stakes are small.

Meanwhile we could hear wafted off from the shore the dismal sounds of conch-shells, blown by the natives as a sign of mourning for their chief. The following day a deputation of chiefs came off to greet King Cacabau, and to present him with sundry articles as a

sign of good feeling. The giving of presents is always a great ceremony with the natives, and their mode of procedure is decidedly interesting to a stranger. The presents brought off by these chiefs consisted of a root called kava, which is used for chewing, two large rolls of sennet, which is the cocoanut fibre plaited up and used as twine, and endless yards of tapa, which is the bark of a tree, beaten out, and used as cloth for covering the human body, screens, and all other similar purposes. The tapa was brought on board wound round the loins of the bearers; and as each man had some thirty or forty yards about him in this manner, they presented rather a curious appearance as they came up the gangway, which feat was accomplished with some difficulty. As each individual reached the deck he squatted down in front of the king, and when all were on board they formed a semicircle, with the sennet and the kava in the middle. Then one who seemed the principal personage acted as spokesman for the rest, and in a short speech no doubt expressed their mingled gratitude and delight at being favoured by the august presence of his

Majesty the king. The king's approval of these loyal sentiments was then expressed, not in words, but by a clapping of hands—not by such a clapping of hands as we are accustomed to, but by a sort of marked one, two, three, made with the palm of the hand arched, and accompanied by as many nods of the head, in which he was joined by his retainers. The clapping motion was then gone through by the deputation as a sign of their delight at his approval, as a sort of "So glad you're glad."

This process was repeated as each present was brought forward; when the turn came for the tapa the chiefs had to get up, one by one, and unwind themselves. After this ceremony the king went on shore, and was conducted to what should have been, according to custom, a newly-erected habitation, but somehow it was not. The Fijians are a naturally slow and lazy race, and it seems that the rapid movements of a man-of-war, coming a distance in one day that would take their canoes nearly a fortnight, had not given them time to heat the frying-pan and warm the king's bed.

In the afternoon I went on shore. The

village is a very pretty one, with picturesque thatched huts, not placed in everlasting straight lines, which being produced ever so far both ways do not meet, but dotted here and there underneath the cocoanut-trees, and all around them the most delicious green turf. Perhaps the habitations should rather be called houses than huts, as, though they only consist of one room enclosed by four walls and a roof, most of them cover a large area. In this one room the natives eat, drink, sleep, and have their dwelling. The floor is generally covered with mats, and the richer the owner the more layers of mats are spread out, so that in the house of an important personage the floor is most beautifully soft, such as might be envied by the most luxurious lady in the land of Britain; but then of course you must not mind such things as spiders, lizards, ants, and centipedes. In one of the largest and most conspicuous houses the body of the late chief was lying, and, as our inspection was invited, we entered; the body was embalmed in sandalwood and lime, the coffin then bound round with many folds of tapa and mats, and it often has to remain in this condition for several

months before the funeral takes place. A screen of very fine tapa divided the house into two equal portions, in one of which death sat alone in state, and in the other nature, well represented by the widow of his Majesty, who is a daughter of King Cacabau. Here she sat cross-legged, never moving except to fan herself slowly; and so would have continued to sit, I believe, for many weary days if we had not come to release her by performing the last rites over her late husband. I cannot say her features expressed sorrow for her loss, but rather a sort of indifference, or aptitude to take things as they come. She did not deem it necessary to shed a quantity of tears, but went through her duty as if her lord and master was still conscious of her acts.

Upon our departure she very graciously shook hands with Jack, who is never backward even in the presence of royalty, and, sad to say, I was ungallant enough to slope out at a side door while this ceremony was proceeding. This over, we went for a long walk to investigate for ourselves the beauties of the "garden of Fiji." A narrow pathway leading up a steep incline took us beyond the

confines of the village. It is on occasions like this that I would give something to be a naturalist; then not only would a ramble be doubly interesting to myself, but I could make it more so to you; now I am like a child with a picture-book, as compared with R. B., Esq., in a collection of old masters. Still we all know what pleasure a child derives from his picture-book, if he is in a right humour, and when nature is the book my humour is always accommodating. Certain it is we saw a profusion of lovely trees, flowers, ferns, and creepers, convolvuli of every colour and combination of colours, orchids unfortunately not even in flower; on one side of us, deep down in a gully, completely full of vegetation, to be heard, but not seen, was a rippling, running stream; presently the gully opened out into a sort of basin of ferns, some of which, as I daresay you know, assume in these parts the size and proportions of trees.

After toiling thus pleasantly for about an hour, we came to a small plateau containing a village of three huts on the banks of a stream; here we rested, and refreshed ourselves with cocoanut-milk, while we admired

the view looking back. We then descended in the cool of the evening and had a delicious bathe in a pool near the mouth of the stream. On the following day, all things being prepared, gifts having been exchanged, the surrounding chiefs assembled, a sufficient quantity of figs, yams, cocoanuts, tara, &c., gorged by the natives, and above all her Majesty's representative being tired of waiting, the funeral was ordered to take place. As it was thought that the natives of these parts were not as contented as they should be with our rule, it was deemed necessary that we should make a show, in order to impress them with the idea of our power, and also being powerful we could afford to do honour to the memory of their departed chief.

Accordingly about 1 p.m. all the ship's company and officers were landed on the beach and drawn up in parade order, with the colours flying, ready to receive the governor, who when he landed was received with a general salute and a flourish of trumpets. We then marched up to the house, and drew up in funeral order in two lines between it and the river, which had to be

crossed to reach the grave. Presently the coffin was seen emerging from the house, carried by about twelve sturdy natives, and passed between the two lines, preceded by a French Roman Catholic priest, with a choir of half a dozen handsome tawny boys, and followed by the widow-queen, after whom came the governor, King Cacabau, &c., &c. As soon as the procession had filed past, we followed them in funeral order across the river to the grave, which, having been lined with thirty or forty mats, received the body of the once powerful chief. Not many years ago the grave of so great a man would have been lined not only with mats, but with human bodies of the slaughtered wives of the despot. Christianity has at all events done away with this horrible custom.

I am just becoming conscious that a description in order to be interesting must be brief, which this certainly is not. My only excuse is that being on a bed of sickness it has served *pour passer le temps.* Perhaps you will say, But why should we be inflicted with it? You must not conclude from the above that I am very ill. A few small scratches on the leg have, as usual in this

climate at this time of the year, refused to heal; the doctor prescribes perfect rest for the wounded limb, under the influence of which treatment it is rapidly assuming its usual appearance.

Captain B. is also suffering from the same cause, only his injury is in the finger instead of the leg. As he has kindly allowed me the use of his cabin we make an interesting couple of invalids, none the less amicable that I envy him for being able to walk, and he envies me for being able to write. Soon after our return to Levuka the "W——" arrived with the commodore. But I think I told you we were ordered to fetch Sir Arthur Gordon, so here we are at the present moment just inside the Great Barrier Reef, steering as straight as the rocks will let us for Cooktown, on the Endeavour River, where we shall meet the mail-steamer from Sydney with coal, and shall hear by telegram if Sir Arthur Gordon is coming or not. If he is, we proceed to Torres Straits; if not, we fly away south to Brisbane and thence to Sydney.

COOKTOWN,
May 21*st.*

Hurrah! Rejoice with me. We have received a telegram ordering us to proceed to Sydney immediately; so we are off to-morrow, much to the disappointment of the good inhabitants, who were preparing all sorts of festivals for us. Cooktown is a very primitive place in the north of Queensland.

Yesterday morning the mayor and corporation came off to give the captain and officers a formal welcome, and requested that as time was so short they would all meet at a public room in the town and spend a convivial evening. Accordingly soon after eight o'clock I was left alone with my pipe and book; however, the band of the Cooktown volunteer fire brigade came down to serenade us. I soon found that serenading and reading do not go well together. When this was over the band retired up the town, where the followers of Bacchus were just getting jovial, to judge from the snatches of songs, &c., &c., wafted down the river to me. About midnight the strains of a march that should have been lively, only the musicians

seemed to have gone wrong, could be heard getting closer and closer, and soon it was apparent that Cooktown was escorting the officers back to the ship. To-day there is a cricket-match, which I am going to drive out and see. Leg much better. We leave to-night.

SYDNEY,
Wednesday, June 18th, 187—.

I have not much to tell you, but will write a line to let you know "all's well."

We are back in Sydney again, and find it improves on acquaintance, perhaps owing to a long sojourn with the South Sea Islanders. Gaiety is again the order of the day, and I am overhead in responsibility just at present, having undertaken a private dance, and also to get up a dance among some naval officers the week after. Our next movements are at present unknown, but here we remain until that white elephant, the commodore, makes his appearance; not that he is anything but an admirable man, but still he is the commodore. Probably the opening of the Exhibition here in September next will necessitate our presence here. The building is now

almost complete, and looks like an elephant standing on an ant-hill, as seen from the harbour.

SYDNEY,
Sunday, July 13th, 187—.

I don't think I have heard from you since last I wrote, but they say no news is good news—a useful consolation. We have now been lying in Sydney harbour for a month, and a very enjoyable time it has been. You cannot think the difference there is in Sydney as seen by a mind with the English polish on, and the same after the polish has worn off, which is invariably the case after a stay of some months in the South Sea Islands. The diamonds of Australia are bright, but rough, and have to go home to be cut; and then again, in a place like this, where there are all sorts and descriptions of people, it is very difficult to be able to divide them out, and to know whom to be intimate with, and whom to treat merely as casual acquaintances. My circle of intimate friends is now of such a size that my time is fully employed in going from one house to another, in each of which one is received with such hospitality that the only anxiety is how to return it.

I told you in my last letter that we were busy arranging the preliminaries for a dance, which took place on shore last night in a room particularly adapted for terpsichorean performances, and which I think we may certainly pronounce an unqualified success; everything went off swimmingly, without a hitch, and our minds are now at ease, although our pockets are about to be lightened. However, this latter does not much matter, as we are off again in ten days' time for another trip amongst the islands, which will last about two months. First to Samoa, to meet Sir Arthur Gordon, and then to take him on to Fiji, after which we shall probably proceed to New Zealand, where we may hope for a few months of peace and quiet.

Our departure is sudden, and upsets a good many arrangements for future recreation; among others a trip up country for some shooting and riding, also some private theatricals in which I was going to assist.

And now for a little business on a subject which I almost regret to mention, as it means leaving the "happy hunting-grounds," but of course it is necessary to look to the future. The subject is promotion—a serious one.

They say that "out of sight out of mind" is a maxim that may be applied with some truth to the proceedings of the admiralty in this respect, and it is fully exemplified by two sub-lieutenants, who have been over five years in that rank, now serving out here. Now if the name of B. is ever to be known in her Majesty's naval service, it is necessary that I should be promoted much sooner than that. I see a list in the *Gazette* of ten sub-lieutenants *selected* for promotion, and I wish them luck and a speedy rise to higher grades. But why should not I be *selected* also, say at the end of this year or soon after? The only other alternative is retirement before many years are over, and then, although life will still be well worth living to me, it will be a case of farewell to fame and reputation. I only mention this in case you might sit next to the "Ruler of the Queen's Navy," or some such influential personage at dinner, and then under the felicitous influence of good diet, and the flowing vintage of champagne, put it to him somewhat in that light. Of course promotion by selection is not approved of by everybody, but it is the only way of preventing complete stagnation; it is surely better

that a few should get on than that no one should get on at all.

The Sydney Exhibition building is almost finished now, but they say it cannot be opened till October. There seems to be a general doubt as to whether it will be a success, more especially as the Melbourne one comes next year, and is sure to eclipse it. We have an opera company here, but the account of their performances is so disheartening that I have not been once; but I went to a concert the other evening, given by the Sydney Musical Union, at which a very interesting cantata, called the "Erl King's Daughter," was well performed. I think that now you have got all my news.

At Sea,
August, 187—.

For the second time we have left dear old Sydney behind, and are on our way to the South Sea Islands. Sydney has become on better acquaintance quite a second home, to which we return periodically after a visit to other parts of the station. I have some very good friends there now.

We have just left the island of Ovalau, one

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of the Fiji group, on our way to Samoa. Perhaps an account of a mechi-mechi in Fiji might interest you. You must know that all the inhabitants of the groups situated to the eastward of the South Sea Islands are supposed to have sprung from the same stock originally, and have still similar customs.

Among these is the mechi-mechi, which in some cases is singing and dancing combined, and in others the one without the other.

The Samoans, Tongans, and Fijians, all practise this custom; and when they are found together, as in Fiji, there is some rivalry between them. Behold, then, the close of a lovely day, which has been spent in a cricket-ground in the neighbourhood of Levuka. A match which every one has enjoyed, not only for the sake of the game, but also for the good-fellowship at the same time exhibited, has been decided in favour of us.

The two elevens have dined together, and are now adjourning to the billiard-room to have another friendly bout at pool. Jack, W., and myself, in accordance with a previous ar-

rangement, separate from the rest and wander off together towards the native town. The sunny day has been succeeded by a star-lit night, so enjoyable in a tropical climate. We have dined well, after a day of hard exertion, and are just in the humour to enjoy nature's beauties inwardly, so we walk along arm-in-arm, happy, but silent. After a mile along the main road we branch off by a small path under some trees overshadowing some native houses. Here the stars cannot penetrate, and the way is somewhat difficult to find, as W. and I discovered to our cost, when my foot slipped, and, stumbling, I dragged him along with me into a ditch; it was luckily dry, however, and we are soon on our way again, exercising a little extra caution. Presently we stopped opposite the low door of a native house, from which the dim light of an oil lamp shone on our path. Here we halted, and were presently joined by F. and T., who are officials under our government, and consequently well known to the natives, with whom they have frequent intercourse. Hearing that all the preparations were complete, we entered the house of a chief named Sakiusi, which consists of one room with

thatched wall and roof. The floor is covered with layers of mats, which make it beautifully soft, and at one end is a part raised above the rest by extra layers of mats, and therefore extra soft, on which we seat ourselves.

Presently Sakiusi enters, and after introductions by F. and T., who interpret for us, seats himself on our right; some other natives follow close and seat themselves in a semicircle in front of us. They are all extremely fine men; Sakiusi in particular looks every inch a gentleman and a chief. There are also present now ten men and two women of Tonga, who seat themselves in a group on our left front. Last, but not least, comes Sakiusi's wife, a truly magnificent woman, daughter of a chief, standing nearly six feet without boots or stockings, handsome and graceful, and very prettily dressed, the latter perhaps more scanty than would be allowed in an English ball-room, but still perfectly decent. She says, "Syandra" (the native greeting), meaning "Your eye is open," to each of us in succession, and then seating herself next to Sakiusi proceeds to manufacture some selucas or cigars, made of native

tobacco rolled in a banana leaf; these she lights in her own fair mouth, and hands one to each of us. I took a few whiffs, as this is considered a great compliment, and then laid it aside in favour of a Manilla from my own pocket. In the meanwhile some refreshment is being prepared in the shape of kava. The root of a tree is used for this beverage. According to custom it is first chewed by one of the attendant women to prepare it for mixing, but in deference to our ideas it is grated between two stones. The brewer (if I may so call him) sits in the middle of the room with the kava-bowl between his legs; the root, having been powdered, is handed to him; he places it in the bowl; water is then poured over it, and now comes the point where the skill of the brewer is shown forth. Having stirred it about with his hands, he takes a bundle of cocoa-nut-fibre, which he passes through the water now tinged with kava-juice, collecting in it the root; then he wrings it out like a wet towel on one side, again returning the root to the bowl; this process is repeated several times, by which means the beverage is perfectly filtered from all impurities. During

the whole of this stirring and wringing a skilful performer goes through the most graceful motions with his arms and body. While this has been going on our Tongans have commenced to sing. Seated in a group, almost motionless, and looking as sedate and serious as a crown-jury, one takes the lead, and after the third note the others join in. I cannot describe to you the dreamy enjoyment produced by this combination of time, place, and occupation.

As to the singing, there has only been one thing of the kind that has pleased me more.

Perhaps you remember my writing from Japan of a trip to Yeddo one Sunday, to hear a service performed by some converts to the Greek Church. There was a similarity and yet a difference about this. Chant after chant they went through, all taking their parts with great precision, and keeping time after the first start without any guides, the two women's voices being distinctly heard in conjunction with the harsher voices of the men.

Some people might say there was not sufficient variety, but I am fond of a Gre-

gorian chant, and these seemed an improved version. The subjects of these songs are generally some recent event which has occurred within the memory of the singer, such as the visit of Sir A. G. to Samoa, and another visit of his to Mbau, the residence of King Cacabau; or, again, the arrival of Mr. M. at Tonga, for which place he is consul; each of these events is described very minutely in the song. Presently, to our surprise, they burst out into the old Hundredth Psalm, which, as they expressed it, was a missionary mechi. Then came another hymn, in which the word hallelujah could be plainly distinguished. After the second song the kava, being brewed, was handed round by one of the Tongan women, beginning with us first; then to Sakiusi and the rest, until the bowl was empty, when another brew was commenced. I had never tasted kava before, and certainly did not like it much, but they say it is an acquired taste; to me the flavour was very like quinine. It is drunk out of a cocoanut-shell; only one draught is allowed; if you pause to take breath, as a novice sometimes does, they conclude you have finished, and take the shell from your hands,

in order to replenish it for the next person.

Until a late hour we remained enjoying this kindly entertainment, and when at last we took our leave we could only imperfectly express to our noble host and his wife the pleasure we had derived from it; but nevertheless they promised to give us another mechi on our return from Samoa.

FIJI,
August 8th, 187—.

We are now making a halt of four days at Fiji on our way to Samoa. It is much pleasanter than when we were here last, as the weather is comparatively cool. Our occupations are much as I described to you before, though, if we are here long enough, on our return several of us hope to make an excursion to one of the large islands, called Viti Levu, where there is a fine river, which may be ascended for some distance, bordered on both sides by coffee and other plantations, the scenery being lovely, and a chance of some shooting. We have an Oxford-eleven man on board, named W., who is taking the trip with us. To-morrow there is to be a grand

cricket-match, when we anticipate a jolly day and a close match. Sir A. Gordon should be off Samoa by the 20th inst., when we shall meet him, and, we hope, return here almost directly; then for New Zealand towards the end of September.

POSTED AT AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND,
September 23*rd*, 187—.

I last wrote before our departure from Fiji. The cricket-match was a great success, resulting in a victory for us. I inclose some extracts from the Fiji papers, which may amuse you.

We arrived at Pango-Pango, situate on the island of Tutuila, one of the Samoan group, on the morning of Sunday, August 17th, here to await the arrival of Sir A. Gordon in the *San Francisco* mail-steamer. The harbour is one of the prettiest I ever entered; it is long, narrow, and deep; on one side the hills rising perpendicularly to a great height, so that it is surprising how the thick verdure with which they are covered can grow; a coral reef runs all round, stretching about fifty yards from the shore. But it is not on the beauty of the country, so much as the

excellent qualities of the inhabitants, that I should wish to dilate. Savages with justice they could not be called; cannibals they never were; their morals as a rule are unimpeachable; they are generous and hospitable to a degree, while their manners are such as might be envied by any nation favoured with the refinements of civilization. Their ordinary greeting, "Talofa," means "I love you," and is characteristic of their nature. Taken collectively they have one failing—enmity between tribes. In each island will be found two tribes, who are continually contending for the supremacy; after a wordy warfare they at last become strung up sufficiently to approach each other in battle-array; but I fancy there is not much loss of life even then, judging from their implements of war. Their chief idea seems to be to devastate the enemy's country in such a way that he shall feel the pangs of poverty for some time afterwards; this is done by levelling the cocoanut-trees and houses with the ground. The cocoanut-tree is bread, meat, wine, clothing, and furniture to them. We anchored in such a position that the mouth of the harbour, together

with the exterior ocean, was visible, in order that the steamer should not slip past without being seen; and having posted a look-out on a neighbouring hill as a precaution, we sat down to wait.

Thus were passed four very pleasant days. On the second day, arrangements having been made with the chief of the district, we witnessed a "hourla-hourla," which is the native dance of these islands, somewhat similar to the "mechi-mechi" of Fiji, which I lately described to Cousin Emily.

After an early dinner a large party started off in two boats for the head of the harbour, about one mile and a half distant. It was a fine starlight night, but no moon, so that the way was somewhat difficult to find. However, before very long the hills closing in on each side of us indicated to us the proximity of our destination; and a few whistles having been given as a signal from the steamboat, which was leading the way, a light was thrown across the water by means of some torches, which showed us where to land. We then proceeded to the house of the chief, where, having seated ourselves on mats, the ceremony of drinking kava and a few speeches

of welcome were gone through; after which we proceeded by light of torches to the scene of our "hourla-hourla." This was a circular space with a flooring of pebbles, and a thatched roof supported by wooden pillars. Mats were placed on one side of this space, on which we seated ourselves side by side with the natives who were not participating in the dance, while many others were looking over our heads from the outside. I must tell you that each officer before this had been selected by one of the dusky ladies from the neighbouring village, who during our stay here attended on us continually. "Selected" is hardly the proper expression, as we certainly had a voice in the matter ourselves. It was brought about in this way: a young lady approaches with a winning smile (many of them are very pretty in their way) and says, "You fren me?" Of course this appeared to us at first a curious sort of interrogation and difficult to answer; however, if the manners of the dark one were sufficiently pleasing, we naturally enough answered in the affirmative, upon which she would appear very pleased and immediately present you with a token of friendship, such

as a bunch of cocoanuts, or a basket of limes, and from this time forth became your faithful attendant and chaperone when you were on shore. Thus each of us became provided with a partner for the dance. On the other side of the building the singers, a bevy of decorated damsels, smeared with cocoanut-oil, were seated in a semicircle. In the centre a light was thrown over the scene by means of dry cocoanut-branches, which were pitched into a cavity among the pebbles, one at a time, producing a bright flare for a few minutes, which gradually diminished until a fresh branch was applied, when it would burst out again. Thus a very fitful glare lit up the proceedings and added greatly to the effect. At one moment the grotesque figures of the dancers, the gestures of the singers, and the upturned faces of the audience were distinctly visible; then, as the flames began to flicker, the whole scene became less and less distinct, until at last you were expecting every moment to be in total darkness, when suddenly the illumination would take a fresh start. And thus all went "happy as a marriage-bell;" dance followed dance, and song upon song in quick succession. Some-

times the men danced and the ladies sang, and sometimes they would change about. The time is kept by beating a hollow piece of wood with a stick. We will say the men are going to dance. The ladies are seated in a semicircle, facing us; the time having been given they commence their chant, which without much variety has a sort of weird liveliness about it, describing some event which has been handed down from their mythology, or, perhaps, something of later occurrence, at the same time giving force to their description by clapping of hands and a variety of gestures, each of which has some meaning attached to it. Presently appears from the outer darkness a huge figure in a stooping posture, with arms in full motion, and stepping forward like a cat on hot bricks; this is the leader; the others—about six in number—follow him closely in the same style; then a variety of gestures are gone through, with occasionally a leap into the air, accompanied by an uncouth yell. The "Prince of Wales" generally led the men's dances; he is the eldest son of the chief, and, I think, the finest man I ever saw; of an immense stature, with hair standing out fully

six inches all round his head, and muscular development, like a very Samson. Fancy this bronze giant dancing away by the ever-changing light, which I described above! Unfortunately, however, it was thought advisable to keep the spirits of the dancers up by an occasional supply of rum, and of this H.R.H. took such a quantity that he gradually became more and more uproarious, till at last he was dancing about on the heads of the ladies; and, if you can imagine it, the scene became a sort of nightmare, which was abruptly brought to a conclusion by the demon-dancer seizing one of the burning branches in his hand, and rushing madly about, waving it over his head, shouting "Samoa!" "Samoa!" which he continued to do until captured by two or three strong men, who bore him away, still shouting and kicking. After this we thought it was time to depart, and went back by moonlight, after, on the whole, a very enjoyable evening. The other days were spent somewhat in this way:—after breakfast the ship would be full of natives, some coming off in large canoes, and a great many swimming; they are all like fish in the water. After amusing our-

selves by showing them the wonders of the ship, our Amazon friend, who would be there among the rest, would get her canoe alongside, and then, amidst much laughter and doubts as to whether we should upset or not, each couple would paddle off for the village, about a mile distant, when an exciting race generally took place. Upon landing we were escorted to the house of the Amazon's family, where, seated cross-legged on mats, we would produce small presents, which we had brought on shore, in return for their hospitality. After a stroll along the shore of the harbour we would return in the evening, and find our friends had prepared a sumptuous repast for us, of which we were to partake with the family; fish, with a variety of vegetables, washed down with cocoanut-milk, was the "bill of fare;" the things are all cooked in leaves and eaten with the finger. They have one dish which would satisfy the veriest gourmand; it is called "Palo-Sami," and consists of the young leaves of the taro mashed up with the inside of a young cocoanut, and boiled in salt water. On the fourth and last day three of us went on shore as usual after breakfast, intending to

go on board again to lunch, as the steamer was expected hourly. We proceeded as usual to the house of our hospitable friends; here there were three sisters, who had constituted themselves "frens" to us respectively. "Sousi" was a tall, handsome, and very intelligent girl; "Tasé" a little bright-eyed beauty; and "Savanelli" a very good-looking young lady. I must here say that W. tells a very amusing story about a fellow-passenger by a mail-steamer, who made frequent use of the expression "Hullohyer." This he had himself adopted, and was consequently called Hullohyer in familiar conversation by us. "Sousi," who was W.'s particular "fren," mistook the word for Hallelujah, by which name he was always called by the natives, who, I think, almost worshipped him in consequence of it. Little children would run up, saying, "Talofa, Halleluja!" and would sing out "Halleluja! Halleluja!" as he went on. Their language is beautifully soft; it contains only fourteen letters, among which are all the five vowels; a word never ends with a consonant, and sometimes as many as three vowels, each one pronounced distinctly, come together.

But I am woefully wandering, and must get back to my tale. They had been entertaining us with songs and dances all the morning, when about twelve o'clock we decided it was time to go off to the ship; so W. signified our desire thus:—"Sousi! Halleluja want canoe, go ship." "Yees," said Sousi in her quiet, intelligent way; and immediately gave orders for a canoe to be procured. It appeared, however, that so many canoes were away at the ship that only one could be found, and "Sousi," who always took the command, deposited "H." in this one, and told us to follow her along the beach to a spot more opposite the ship. "Tasé" and "Savanelli" proceeded with H. over the reef, and away to the ship; but it appears that in going over the reef the canoe struck against a piece of coral, and a small hole was made in the bottom. However, H. got on board safely, and the canoe was brought back for us, with two other smaller ones.

So off we started, "Tasé" and "Savanelli," one in each of the smaller canoes, in attendance, and W., myself, and "Sousi" in the big one,—W., who is not accustomed to

aquatic pursuits, on the front seat, sitting very still, myself on the middle one, and Sousi in the rear, both paddling. Before long we discovered that the canoe was making a little water, so, at my suggestion, W. occupied himself in scooping it out with a cocoanut-shell. However, when about half-way off, the water being now up to our knees, it began to look rather serious, and it seemed that before long we should have no option but to see if we could swim as far as the ship. As a last chance I stopped paddling, and commenced to assist W. by bailing with my hat; but still the water gained on us. Just at this juncture Sousi, whom we had almost forgotten in our anxiety for our own safety, jumped lightly out of the canoe and commenced to swim alongside of it, looking up at us with a merry laugh, and evidently enjoying the joke. The canoe being thus lightened, we proceeded a little further, until at last it was evident that we were sinking. "Sousi" and the other girls still seemed to find the scene more amusing than fearful, as they were laughing away at our blank looks and helpless demeanour. At all events they never lost their presence of

mind for a moment, and just in the nick of time "Tasé" ranged up alongside in her canoe, and, taking me into it, paddled off to the ship, where I found a number of spectators with glasses up, who were also enjoying our predicament. The canoe, having now only one occupant, was soon emptied of the water sufficiently to come slowly on, and we were both landed safely on a dry deck, and, I may almost say, rescued from a watery grave by the presence of mind and intelligence of our Amazonian friends.

I am conscious of having been somewhat lengthy in my account of our Samoan experiences; but if I could have pictured them to you as they appeared to us, you would agree that they were likely to be the most curious of a lifetime.

I find this letter is getting so terribly long that I must send Part II. on a future occasion, as I have still a good deal to tell you about Samoa.

We have arrived at Auckland, after a very good passage from Fiji, just in time to escape a north-easterly gale, accompanied by rain, which is still in full force, so that we have not made out much of the place

yet; but fine weather is prophesied shortly, and we may have a jolly stay here for some time.

AUCKLAND,
October 10*th*, 187—

I finished my last letter with the heroic deeds of our lady-friends at Pango-Pango. Next morning, soon after daylight, the steamer appeared, and anchored off the mouth of the harbour, and Sir A. Gordon and his party were transported to us. The same afternoon we left, and in the evening stopped off a village on the same island, where the two rival chiefs were holding a meeting of reconciliation. A message was sent on shore to convey the High Commissioner's approval of this proceeding, after which we proceeded for Apia.

But I must interrupt the course of my narrative again, as an amusing incident now occurred. You must know that at any great meeting a quantity of pigs are slain and cooked as a contribution to the accompanying feast, and any visitor of importance is presented with a large share of the good things.

Accordingly on this occasion a fine pig

was brought off for the Governor; but, contrary to custom, it had not been roasted, and was still very much alive to the situation. He was a very savage old boar, of an enormous size, and very weighty. With some difficulty piggy was taken forward and his legs tied; meanwhile in the excitement of getting under weigh he was forgotten. It was now one of those beautiful evenings, peculiar to the tropics. All hands were on deck, admiring the sunset on the one hand, and the fast-receding land on the other.

> "And now recommenced the reign of rest and affection and stillness;
> Day with its burden and toil had departed,"

when suddenly there was a commotion on the forecastle; the British tar was seen flying in every direction, for once with his back to the enemy. Piggy had got loose, and was clearing all before him; snorting and grunting, and throwing his snout in the air, he came galloping aft along the gangway on to the quarter-deck. Here again he had it all his own way; nobody felt equal to the occasion; it was rather a case of every man for

himself, and piggy take the hindmost. The best chance of escape seemed to be up a ladder on to the bridge, and for this exalted position everybody immediately rushed. The hindmost happened to be Sir A. G. himself, and piggy, evidently thinking this an opportunity to make himself a name, "went for" the august legs of the High Commissioner: a tragedy in high life was, however, averted, as our pursuer, not being accustomed to going upstairs, missed his footing, and falling backwards, went wrong way first down a skylight into the captain's cabin on the deck below. These quarters did not seem to suit him, as he was off again in a moment, and, pursuing his headlong career, rushed madly into the ward-room, where I was sitting; it was the work of a moment to me to jump on to the table, out of his way, as he rushed on, and, finding the door at the other end of the room shut, made a rapid swerve to the left into the nearest cabin. Here at last he came to a standstill, not being able to get any further, and, jumping up on to the first-lieutenant's bed, lay with his head on the pillow, panting and sobbing as if his heart would break. Now arose the momentous

question, how to get him out again; nobody seemed inclined to go in and carry him out, and for some time the proceedings went no further than an animated discussion outside the door. At last one more adventurous than the rest slipped in with a rope fitted with a running noose at the end; this he slipped over piggy's head, and simultaneously it was hauled tight from the outside, and piggy was dragged, kicking and squeaking, to the butcher's block, where he was promptly slain, to prevent all further complications, and the next day we had much satisfaction in picking his chops.

We arrived at Apia, the principal town of Samoa, situated on the island of Upolu, early the next morning. Most likely Samoan politics will not interest you much, so it will suffice to say that Sir A. Gordon deemed it necessary to remain here ten days, in order to discover which of the two contending parties were sufficiently strong to be recognized, and then to make a treaty with them. In the meantime the weather was so unpleasant that it was difficult to enjoy life, as we generally manage to do wherever we go. Very heavy tropical showers, alternating

with the intense heat of a glaring sun, produced a climate by no means pleasant.

In the town of Apia resides a curious mixture of German, American, and English outcasts from society, who seem to do their share of good in the world by opening up these places for better men who come after them; but in the meantime their baneful influence is shown on the natives who come in contact with them, and who become in consequence morally their equals and intellectually their inferiors. Near to the town was a beautifully-situated pool of running water, surrounded by luxuriant vegetation, where we used to congregate in the evening after our walks in the surrounding country. As they say in "Pinafore," "Love levels ranks," and so does bathing; here High Commissioner and sub-lieutenant met on an equal footing, and disported themselves together beneath a waterfall. One of the above-mentioned walks is perhaps worthy of record. Mr. G., the English consul, W. F., and myself started off one morning to walk to a waterfall, which everybody seemed to have heard of, but no one had seen. However, we procured native guides, who, al-

though somewhat doubtful of the way, took us a lovely walk through dense forest-land, and eventually brought us to the waterfall; here the water goes over an almost perpendicular rock, worn very smooth, and it is a pastime among the natives to sit on the rock and slide down the fall into the pool below. This at first sight looked an almost impossible feat, but one native boy soon assured us to the contrary, by doing it himself. Mr. G. next determined to have a try at it, but required some time to screw up his courage sufficiently; and while he was sitting at the top, interrogating the boy as to how he should sit, &c., lost his balance, slid down sideways, and arrived in the pool "all of a heap." He presently emerged, puffing and blowing, and declaring that it was the most delicious plunge imaginable; and so it certainly was. You sit perfectly upright on the smooth stone, and, having started, shoot off at a rate of thirty-two feet per second down the fall, and, before you know where you are, come with a plunge into fifteen feet of cool water. After having bathed and lunched here, we started on our homeward journey, and had little of adventure until

arriving at a lagoon of salt water, which, stretching for some miles underneath the trees, impeded our approach to the town; the tide being now high the water was about four feet deep, and it would have made an amusing picture to see each of us hoisted on the shoulders of a sturdy native, with two more in front holding our legs in a horizontal position, clear of the water, and thus proceeding in procession for three-quarters of a mile underneath the trees.

From Apia we went to Tonga. Here the natives are highly civilized, according to *our* idea of civilization, and look most ridiculous in consequence. We were only here for one day, which happened to be Sunday, and we were just in time to see them coming out of church in the afternoon. Here was a scene for the pen of a Dickens, or the pencil of a Cruikshank! The king (George I.) in a tall hat and a flowing frock-coat, with a guard of two natives dressed in cast-off marines' clothing; the women, who in their *savage* state seem to have the most perfect taste, decked in the most glaring and incongruous colours—dresses of all shapes, some with bonnets, some with boots, some

with both, and some with neither; the men, in sombre black and white, looking very uncomfortable, and a great many wearing those college-caps with a square board on the top, which can hardly be said to look well even on a well-dressed fellow of one of our noble colleges. I should not wish to laugh at them, however; all this may lead to some good. Hence to Fiji, and farewell to Sir Arthur Gordon, whom we all liked. Another cricket-match, in which we were again victorious; and then away! away! south to Auckland, where we are now enjoying ourselves in a delicious climate, of which more anon.

AUCKLAND,
October 25th, 187—.

I received your letter the other day. What dreadful weather you have been enduring all the summer! But it seems to have been much the same all over the world; it has been very bad here until the last month. Lately we have been revelling in a continued succession of *English* fine days. Auckland is a charming place to come to as a visitor for a few months; the only cause of complaint I have is that

the days and nights seem hardly long enough; in fact the time has slipped away so fast that I am afraid it is fully six weeks since I last wrote to you. Lawn tennis we can get every day, either at some private house or at a club in one of the suburbs, where all the beauty and fashion do congregate of an afternoon; but here strawberries and cream taking precedence of the noble game of tennis, we generally adjourn to a neighbouring house, where a good game can always be obtained. There is a good cricket-ground, beautifully situated in a public park, surrounded by trees and a sloping bank, where we generally have a cricket-match on Saturday afternoons. Dancing goes on to such an extent that were not the young ladies more than ordinarily prepossessing we should soon get tired of it. Shooting in the season is very good, but at present all but rabbits are tabooed; they, however, give very good sport; the same may be said for fishing (in the sea), riding, &c. And last, but not least, in opposition to all these lighter pursuits, I can hear some very good music now and then.

Last week "Haydn's Seasons" was very creditably performed at the Choral Hall, and

the "Hymn of Praise" is now in course of rehearsal. I have become very intimate with the family of Mr. F.; they are all musicians, from the father down to the smallest child. In the evening, after tea and a quiet chat and smoke in the garden, which is of the perfectly irregular description, reaching down the bottom of a gulley to the water's edge, we assemble in the drawing-room; Mr. F. takes the violoncello, Miss F. the piano, another daughter the first violin, and one of the boys the second; quartette follows quartette; Schubert follows Hummel, Beethoven, Mozart, &c., &c., and you can imagine my perfect content. Then we are getting up "Trial by Jury," in which I am to take the part of the "Usher," and Jack that of "Counsel," which incurs frequent practices.

Captain and Mrs. B. are about to make an excursion into the country, to visit the sulphur terraces, which perhaps you may have heard of, and have very kindly asked me to accompany them. They are situated among the mountains on the west coast of this island, and are, I believe, worth a troublesome journey to see.

At the top of a high mountain the hot

water, impregnated with sulphur, seethes and bubbles up from holes in the ground, and pours out over a succession of terraces on the hill-side, some of which are of a beautiful pink colour, and some snow-white; but perhaps I had better describe them after a personal inspection. However, the trip is expensive, and will necessitate my drawing 15*l.* over my account for this year, which I hope you will not mind my doing with so worthy an object in view. We are probably stationed in New Zealand until next April, when we shall return to Sydney. I am glad that you write by the San Francisco mail, as this being on their route your letters reach me much sooner than they would by the other lines.

AUCKLAND,
November 11*th*, 187—.

We left Auckland on Friday, October 31st, at 5 p.m., on board a small coasting-steamer, *en route* for the hot lakes. Our party consisted of Captain and Mrs. B., Mr., Mrs., and Master K., and myself.

Our first night was not very comfortable; a small steamer and a whole colony of children of any age up to four, supposed to

inhabit the ladies' cabin, but overflowing from the doorway in dribblets, and crawling all over the saloon and up the ladder, like flies out of a saucer of treacle, their mothers and nurses being too ill to look after them. However, during the night we managed to circumvent some 140 miles of coast, and in the morning found ourselves steaming up Tauranga harbour, with the town of that name ahead of us; a pretty little place as seen from the distance in the early morning sun, but on closer inspection has an appearance as of starting life too soon and never reaching maturity. In fact it was born at the time of the war, when some troops were stationed here, and since then has been kept going by a few farmers who have settled on the surrounding country.

About ten o'clock we reached the jetty, and proceeding to the hotel clamoured for breakfast, the sea-air having sharpened our appetites to an unusual extent. It was too late to attempt our next stage this day, so, having an afternoon to dispose of, I drove out with Major S. to a cricket-match which was exciting great interest at a spot some five miles from the town. Here the noble game

was being conducted in the good old rustic style, in a sort of ploughed field, but none the less enjoyable for that. All the beauty and fashion were present, each individual riding to the festive scene on his or her own horse, and it was great fun in the evening to see them preparing for a start homewards. The horses having wandered in every direction had to be caught and sorted out, those that succeeded in catching theirs first having to scour the country and drive the others in. One belonging to a friend of mine got on the other side of a deep ravine and "winked at him," as he expressed it; evidently the horse saw he was a "new chum," which is the name they give to any person lately arrived.

The following day we were to start at an early hour for our next resting-place, but the weather being unsettled we decided to wait until the next morning. In the afternoon I rode out with Lieutenant H., to see his farm; he was with me in the "E——," and, much to my surprise, turned up at the cricket-match the day before. It appears that in an unhappy moment he retired from the service, thinking that farming in Australia would

suit him better. He left England with 2000*l.* and a partner, came out to New South Wales and lost the partner together with most of the money; after which he spent about six months picking up colonial experience, which cost him the rest of his small fortune, and with a sad heart and a light pocket he came on to New Zealand, where he at last settled down on 110 acres of land in this neighbourhood; here he lives all by himself, his only companions being a dog and a calf. His house consists of one room and a large verandah, and from the early morning till sunset he tills the soil to earn his livelihood. His last words to me were, "Tell any fellow who intends to leave the service what you have seen here, and that he is much better off where he is."

The next day it was again raining in the morning, so our start was postponed once more. But in the afternoon we thought it better to make a struggle, and started off bag and baggage in a vehicle something between a stage-coach and a butcher's cart. Our road lay through the Gate Pah, which was the scene of a serious defeat sustained by our troops in the Maori war.

At six o'clock we arrived at Oropi (Europe), where we found a very comfortable little hotel, kept by a man named D., who is, I believe, heir to an estate near Epsom. He is now an old man, and has got so accustomed to a rough life out here that for a long time he would not answer the advertisements in the English papers; but his friends are doing their best to induce him to go home, and it is expected he will eventually take their advice.

The next morning we were up at half-past six, and started off with every prospect of a lovely day. The first eighteen miles lay through the bush, and as the road was of the roughest description our progress was very slow. Bump, bump, bump, we went over logs of wood laid horizontally, this being what they call a "corduroy road;" needless to say, we should have preferred macadam. But for all this jolting we were fully compensated by the lovely scenery as we went along.

Eighteen miles of bush does not sound very romantic, though in reality the bush is a vast forest of enormous trees, "all a-growing and a-blowing" in the wildest state

of nature, and struggling for existence with the many creepers which, twining round and round them, sometimes smother them in their embrace. Beneath the branches of the larger trees are large quantities of New Zealand tree-ferns, waving their heads to the breeze. At one moment we were almost shut in on every side, and the next the scene would open out into a lovely gorge, with a sea of trees spreading out below us, the whole completing a picture which one could continue to drink in, in a dreamy way, for hours together. But this sort of scenery requires a sunny day, which we were fortunate in having, as there is nothing to relieve the constant green, which with the sun in full force comes out in every variety of shade, but on a dull day appears all of one sombre hue.

About noon we halted in a lovely spot for luncheon, and while the horses were resting, Mrs. B. and I collected a quantity of ferns, which abound all along the banks. There are many specimens here which are only found in a fossilized state in the old country.

About four o'clock we emerged from the bush and obtained our first glimpse of Lake Rotorua, in a basin below us. We were now

approaching the regions of the hot springs, and on the opposite side of the basin could see columns of vapour rising here and there from the earth. Towards one end of the lake there is an island to which is attached a legend of a young man who sat on the summit of a hill and discoursed such sweet music that a maiden named "Hinemoa" swam from the shores of the lake to the island in order to see with her eyes the being who could so enchant her mind; of course they fell in love and lived happy ever afterwards.

As we drove into Ohine-motu, which is a native village on the shores of the lake, we were surrounded on all sides by hot springs, which, bubbling up from the ground, gave forth a strong smell of sulphur, which pervaded the air.

After having dined at the hotel, we wandered forth in the dusk towards a point at which there were a number of hot pools; here the natives were seated up to their necks in warm water, and talking over the events of the day. Before going to bed we followed their example, and smoked our nocturnal pipe in a covered bath attached to

the hotel, and very delicious we found it. The sulphur is supposed to have a marvellous healing property over all sorts of diseases; certain it is that it sent us to bed contented with our lot, and disposed to be friendly with all mankind.

The next morning we were up at half-past five, having a long day before us. We first went four miles up a steep hill, and then six miles through more bush, even surpassing in beauty that we had gone through before, and teeming with ferns of every description; past two lakes with the water of a lovely blue, and then a halt at Wairoa at eight o'clock for breakfast. Off again at nine o'clock, accompanied by a chief and six sturdy natives, and also a female guide named Sophia, a very handsome Maori woman.

A walk of one mile brought us to Lake Tarawera, across which we had to pull a distance of nine miles. This our crew soon accomplished, and we again landed on the other side of the lake. Here we left the boat, and having obtained a canoe proceeded to walk another mile to Lake Rotomahana, while the canoe paddled up a hot stream that connects this with Tarawera.

We had now arrived at the scene of many wonders. The lake itself is not beautiful, the water being of a muddy hue, but the whole country round is teeming with holes and fissures, out of which hot water and steam are continually bubbling and fizzing. The water of the lake is warm, and here and there can be seen bubbling up from the bottom. The mountains surrounding it are said to have been active volcanoes not many centuries ago.

The weeds, which grow in great profusion, are swarming with water-fowl, which the natives will not permit any one to shoot; there are also a few fish, which have been placed here by an English gentleman; they, however, lead a precarious existence, as they occasionally approach to near a hot hole, when they are sucked in and come to the surface again ready boiled for dinner. We found two fine fat carp floating about in this condition, off which the natives lunched. I must confess this sounds like the exaggerated story of a penny-a-liner, but it is really perfectly true.

On arriving at the head of the hot stream, we had to wait for the arrival of the canoe,

in order to cross it, and meanwhile Sophia entertained us with an account of the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to these parts, when he encamped on the lake for several days. Crossing the stream we were soon facing the "white terrace," the beauties and wonders of which it would be impossible for me adequately to describe. Can you imagine about half-way up the side of a steep hill an apparently bottomless hole, in which at times nothing is visible but steam, while at others it is flowing over with boiling water, which appears of a most exquisite creamy-blue. From the edge of this crater down to the bottom of the hill are a succession of terraces, over which this water, impregnated with sulphur, flows into the lake. These terraces spread out fan-shape to about twice the width at the bottom that they are at the top, and as the water flows over them it leaves a sediment of sulphur behind, which forms in course of time a thick crust of a creamy-white colour at the tops, which lower down changes to a brilliant orange, and further on again to brown. I believe not long ago it was all white, and they say it is gradually changing colour and losing its beauty; but as

it is now it is very beautiful. This crust of sulphur forms in such a way on the face of each terrace as to look from a little distance as if it were some beautifully-carved work, while the upper surface of each step is generally cupped out so that the water standing on it assumes the creamy-blue colour similar to that in the upper pool.

After feasting our eyes on this scene for some minutes, we proceeded along a narrow path on the side of the hill and presently came across two geysers in full play. Standing on an eminence we looked down about fifteen feet into a hole, where the water was boiling so violently that every now and then it would burst out and rise to a height of twenty feet in the air. Even while we were standing there it came so unpleasantly close to us that Sophia made us hurry on to a safer spot. Proceeding a little further we came down to the shores of the lake again, on to a flat piece of ground covered with hot pools and slabs of hot stone. Here we made a halt for lunch, and, placing our potatoes in one of the holes, they were soon ready boiled in nature's oven. They also say that meat

can be roasted by placing it on some of the stones.

After lunch we started off again up the hill, and presently came to a basin in the side of it, on which is situated a Green Lake, in which the water is quite cold, while all the surrounding ground is hot and bursting out in every direction with steam and hot water. There were some pools in which the sulphur had collected so thick as to appear like a grey mud, and this was boiling away, so that the pool appeared like the mouth of a huge toad spitting out grey mud. Again, there was a vast fissure in the rock, from which the steam was blowing off with such force that you could not hear any one speak in its vicinity. After seeing these wonders we entered the canoe, to cross over to the "pink terrace," which is situated on the other side of the lake, and is supposed to be the most beautiful sight of all. The natives had lined the bottom of the canoe with ferns, and as we lay back on them we wished we could have remained there for weeks, and spent our time paddling about the lake and occasionally refreshing ourselves with a bath in the "pink terrace."

As we floated on in a dreamy way the "pink terrace" suddenly appeared in sight from behind a hill, with the sun shining full on it, and nothing more beautiful could be imagined. It is similar in formation to the "white terrace," but the colour is this heavenly pink, which with the blue of the water on the surface of each terrace forms a combination of colour which beats description or imitation. Here we had a delicious bath in one of the upper cups, or rather in several of them; for by approaching or receding from the upper hole you could obtain a bath of any temperature you like. Here, however, as everywhere, the ubiquitous Brown, Jones, and Robinson have left their mark, and to their shame be it mentioned, have defaced the faces of several of the terraces by scribbling their names on them in pencil, which, curiously enough, cannot be rubbed out again; but they gradually get coated over with sulphur, and disappear. Very reluctantly we left this spot and again entered the canoe, in which we were floated right down the hot stream which I mentioned before as connecting the two lakes. Back again by the boat, and a lovely drive by the light of the

setting sun brought us to Ohine-motu, where we again spent the night. The next day we had a wet drive all the way back through the bush, which we were very glad to get over. I must now end the account of our trip, which, although a long one, I have had to hurry over a good deal towards the end, in order to catch the mail.

AUCKLAND,
December 7th, 187—.

There is not much news that will interest you from our part of the world, but as this mail goes to-morrow I send this to say that all is well. The usual round of amusements has been going on with little interruption, and we are of one opinion, that Auckland is the nicest place we have visited yet. Another of our officers has taken the important step of life, much to the delight of our Auckland friends, who enjoy nothing better than a little scandal. Eligible young men are scarce, while the fair sex are, on the contrary, plentiful. A man-of-war is therefore a citadel which has to stand a severe siege during its stay in port; so severe indeed has it become for the few of us that are now left unscathed by Cupid's darts, that I intend

to-morrow to run the blockade, and having reached an island outside the enemy's lines I shall there take four days' rest, to recruit my somewhat failing energy; after which I defy the storming parties of our fair opponents to do their worst.

We have been enjoying lovely weather lately, and such glorious moonlight nights as to make one wish sometimes that life was one long night. A drive by the light of the moon home from a country house, where you have been enjoying a jolly dance, is one of the pleasantest things I know. But a few days since I undertook to drive Tommy out in a buggy to a house six miles from town, to which neither of us had been before, and, as a natural consequence, we lost our way, and were at last found drawn up in a ditch by the side of the road in a helpless state of uncertainty what to do next. The man from whom we obtained the buggy had neglected to provide us with any lamps, which fact our shore-going friends who helped us out of our difficulty took advantage of, as well as our helpless condition, and the next day it was generally known that two naval officers had been found cruising about without any

bow-lights on a dark night and in a strange country.

WELLINGTON,
January 28th, 187—.

Bishop Selwyn, during many years of his mission in Polynesia, used to write all his letters home on board the yacht, while cruising from island to island, where he had no distracting duties to interrupt his flow of thoughts; and although I cannot plead the same noble duties during our stay in harbour, still it is far more difficult amid the whirl of social life to collect one's thoughts than when sailing quietly over the seas.

I have just returned from a trip inland, partly to see the country and partly for a day among the rabbits, which are very plentiful not far from here.

We started about three o'clock one afternoon, our party consisting of five, all jolly good fellows, "though I says it, as shouldn't." We had to go about fifty miles by the train and sixteen by coach, in order to reach our destination.

After leaving the town of Wellington the line winds in and out along the sea-shore for about ten miles, giving a very good view of

the harbour as you go; and as it was the afternoon of the regatta, the scene, as we saw it, was enlivened by the white sails of many yachts, as they sailed round the course. Upon reaching the "Lower Hutt" the line leaves the sea and branches off up a valley watered by the Hutt river. The valley is in the shape of the Greek Δ, with a range of barren hills on each side of it—very sombre on a cloudy day, but with the afternoon sun shining on them they appear of a beautiful, soft, purple colour, so that the view, looking up the valley to where the hills converge at one point, was very pretty. Upon reaching the head of the valley the train begins to ascend, until, having reached a height of 1400 feet, the descent on the other side is commenced. The length of the ascent is fourteen miles, while that of the descent is only two and a half, so that you can imagine the latter is pretty steep, and is only accomplished with safety by means of very powerful breaks and a very ingenious locomotive, with two engines in it, one working horizontally with four pair of wheels gripping a raised rail in between the two ordinary ones. The scenery going down this mountain-gorge is very beautiful to

a stranger, but the New Zealander thinks little of it; for though nothing of the kind can be seen anywhere else in the world the New Zealand bush-scenery is very similar all over the country. The "bush," as I mentioned in a former letter, is the name given to the vast forests which cover the land, much as Old England was overspread in former days; and as the only colour presented to the eye is green, on a cloudy day the country looks decidedly dull; but with a brilliant sunshine all the infinite shades of green are brought out to perfection, and vie with each other in a perfect confusion of harmony. As we descended the gorge the sun was shining just over the tops of the hills at our backs, and you know the way in which, as the sun gets low, its rays spread out and seem to soften the colour and outline of all they meet. Before and below us was a mass of tree-tops, covering the sides of rounded hills, which, some near and some far away, curved down into the valley below, where could be seen the waters of a winding rivulet. The country after this was flat and uninteresting to the end of our railway-journey, after which we got into a coach and three, and were soon bowling along

a flat, straight road, through partially-cleared "bush."

Under these circumstances the country had a very peculiar appearance, in order to explain which, I must begin at the beginning.

When an Englishman first buys his land, it is covered with trees and scrub; his object then is to clear this away, and in its place substitute grass-fields and pastures for sheep and cattle; so, beginning with the trees of the forest, he marks out all the best, and, cutting them down, saws them into planks for sale in the timber market; then he sets fire to the remainder, all the scrub is consumed, and of the trees all that is left is the charred stumps, which gradually rot away and assist to manure the land. The country thus has a very odd appearance, as you drive past these burnt and crumbling stumps.

At nine o'clock we reached our destination, and soon sought our beds, in preparation for a day's shooting on the morrow. An account of the slaughter of poor bunny would not interest you much; let it suffice that we had very good sport, and, having collected a bag of 100 rabbits, spent a jovial evening at the house of a gentleman living in the neighbour-

hood, where many good stories were told amid much laughter.

WELLINGTON,
January 15*th*, 188—.

Curiously enough, while anxiously expecting a steamer to come in with a mail from San Francisco this morning, another steamer came unexpectedly with a Brindisi mail, bringing me your letter of November 21st. It pleases me much to find you appreciate my Samoan letter, but I did not expect to hear it compared to "The Earl and the Doctor," for, although I have not yet read that book, I have heard a good deal about Lord Pembroke lately from —— at Auckland, at whose house he and Dr. Kingsley spent a good deal of their time while anchored in Auckland harbour. Did you ever hear the name of —— in Yorkshire? I fancy it is an old family name there. Mr. —— came out to New Zealand as a young man, to make his way in the new colony. He is now a very entertaining old gentleman to any one who can appreciate his good qualities. He is a perfect musician, and a deep thinker upon many subjects, and many a pleasant hour have I spent in his company.

He has nicknamed me "The Judicious Bottle-holder." But here I am talking about Auckland, when I ought to be telling you about Wellington.

We had a very good passage, lasting four days, from Auckland. Port Nicholson is a very fine harbour, on which the town of Wellington is situated. It is completely landlocked and surrounded by hills, which, being rather barren, give it a wild appearance. The town has some handsome buildings in it—at least they appear so from a distance; but as they are built of wood they look more like models upon closer inspection. The Government House people, whom we knew at Sydney before they came here, are very kind to us; and as they have a very good lawn-tennis ground, we play there nearly every afternoon. There is a very good library in the House of Assembly here, which they have very kindly thrown open to us. The librarian is a regular old character; after looking at me for a few minutes, the first time I went there, he went round to the shelves and ferreted out the very books I had been wishing for some time to read; among others "The Earl and the Doctor," which you

mentioned in your last letter. The San Francisco mail arrived shortly after the former, and brought me quite a budget of letters, among others a very nice one from Cousin Emily.

Wellington is a much-abused place on account of the weather; it certainly does blow a little here. They say you may know a Wellington man anywhere, because, when he comes to the corner of a street, there is an involuntary movement of his hand towards his hat. To a stranger who does not know the ways of the place it is a little awkward, as I found that the first few days on shore were spent chiefly in *chasing* my hat. We shall possibly be here until the beginning of February, and then proceed to Christchurch for a few weeks. I hope the cold winter has not been very trying to you.

PORT LYTTELTON,
February 24th, 188—.

I received your letter (dated the first day of the New Year) a short time back, and was glad to hear good news of everybody. It was very kind of you to exceed my exorbitant request for money by 10*l.*, which has come in very opportunely, as it will enable

me to visit the southern part of New Zealand, near the town of Dunedin, where the scenery is said to surpass any to be seen in the rest of the island. We go by train from here a distance of some hundred miles, through the best parts of the agricultural districts, and shall get a good view of the country on the way, stopping at Dunedin for two days' racing and a ball. I think my last letter was from Wellington, but the time has gone so quickly, having been so pleasantly employed, that I can hardly remember where I left off. We are now lying at anchor inside the breakwater of Port Lyttelton, which is the outlet of the Canterbury industries, and is a very enterprising little place; the harbour is artificially formed, and lined with numerous piers, at each of which are several large merchant-ships loading with grain and wool; the railway-station is close to the wharf, and the trucks run right alongside the ships. The town is completely surrounded by hills, and the rail goes at once through a long tunnel, where you emerge on to the Canterbury plains, Christchurch being situated about ten miles inland. These plains stretch, with an imperceptible rise for about eighty miles,

to the foot of a range of snow-clad hills, and are wonderfully laid out for agricultural purposes. Christchurch is a very pretty town, the worst that its maligners can say of it, being that it is flat. It is a mile square, and all the streets are at right-angles, except one, which crosses diagonally; there would be too much regularity about this were it not that the view on each side of you is interrupted by noble trees and a winding river, which you tumble across at every turning, with pretty little wooden bridges over it. Outside the town the country is dotted in every direction with beautiful country-seats, reminding one more of Old England than anything to be seen elsewhere. In the town there are some fine buildings, a cathedral in course of construction, a very well stocked museum, and a large park, in the middle of which is one of the best cricket-grounds in the world.

The people are such as you do not find elsewhere in the colonies, being thoroughly English, and keeping up a strong connection with the old country. They are hospitality personified, at least to us, though casual visitors do not give them such a good name,

and say they are too select. We find it impossible to accept half the hospitality offered us. I have been staying for several days with the ——'s, who live about four miles outside the town. They have a beautiful house and grounds, the garden is exquisitely laid out, and has a stream running through it, artificially dammed, full of trout, and with a bathing-pool just below the lawn-tennis ground, convenient for a dip between a game of tennis and dinner; then there is a sort of orchard-garden, teeming with fruit-trees bowed down with the weight of peaches, apricots, greengages, apples, &c.

In the house there is an organ; Mrs.—— plays and sings beautifully. Need I say any more? My stock of appreciative adjectives has run short. The people here are strictly religious, in consequence of which, being Lent, we have no dances, which I am conscious is a sorry complaint amid so much that is enjoyable.

After our trip to Dunedin the ship returns to Auckland.

SAMOA,
Sunday, May 23rd.

Here we are again in Samoa, this truly

beautiful country, with a climate which turns everything not indigenous rotten, from a human being to a pair of boots, and at the same time nourishes one of the finest races I have seen; but perhaps the Samoan on visiting England might make a very similar remark.

We had been hoping in desperation that we should find affairs settled, as in that case our stay would be short; but, on the contrary, they are even more unsettled than at the time of our last visit; so we are fixed here until relieved by another man-of-war. King Maleatoa is quite unable to suppress the rebels, and we will not allow them to turn him out, consequently things remain *in statu quo.*

On the second day of our stay we left Apia in the morning with the king on board, he having requested a passage to the island of Savaii, to interview his rebel subjects in that portion of his dominion, and landed him at Mataatu the same evening. Next day, about noon, we received a royal message saying that peace was proclaimed, in honour of which there was to be a feast at two o'clock that afternoon, at which we were invited to attend. At one o'clock we landed,

a party of seven, and proceeded to walk to the village of Safota, distant two miles: our path lay along the sea-shore, winding in and out beneath the trees, and occasionally along the beach or over rocks: we found the shade of the trees very grateful, as the heat was terrific; the scenery on all sides was indescribably beautiful; now tall cocoa-nuts waving overhead and leaning this way and that, so that their straight, bare stems crossed at every angle; presently across the mouth of a river which, winding round a corner, disclosed a lovely little nook of fresh, green vegetation; then on under trees of many descriptions, overgrown with countless varieties of creepers—some with beautiful convolvulus-shaped flowers of a pale-blue colour, others conspicuous only by their large, round leaves; across another river, and then out on the rocks, a short distance along a sandy beach, and we arrived at Safota.

The king was having his afternoon siesta, so, rather than disturb him, and in order to refresh ourselves, we proceeded to the other end of the village for a bathe, followed by a goodly quantity of natives, chiefly children. It was amusing to watch these little fellows,

of all ages from three to thirteen, who are like so many young ducks in the water, tumble off the rocks into the sea, head first, tail first, upside down, head over heels, one after the other, out and in again, "keeping the pot a-boiling," all the time laughing and shouting and making signs to us how pleasant it was. We went on a little further to a fresh-water pool, in a basin of rocks, close to the sea, situated so that the waves just washed into it at high tide; here we had a swim in the sea, over the coral reefs, and then a dip in the fresh-water pool, very refreshing! Then back again to the chief's house, where we found the banquet spread, and, with the king, sat down for a feed: baked sucking-pig, taro, yams, bread-fruit, and last, but not least, palo-sami, that delicately flavoured dish,—all washed down with copious draughts of cocoanut-milk, flavoured if you wish with a little of "something stronger." This having been disposed of under the shade in the open air, we adjourned to the house to witness the ceremony of presenting gifts to the visitors: this was done first by the men, who advanced in procession with baskets of native food, chanting as they

came; these having been set before the house in which we were seated, speeches were made by orators of both sides, explanatory of the situation. The Safotans had come to the conclusion that they had made a mistake, that Maleatoa was the best king, and that in order to strengthen his government they should support him in future.

While this speechifying was proceeding we heard more chanting in the distance—women's voices this time—accompanied by the usual tom-tom, and, oh, horror! a penny whistle! This may have been introduced in compliment to us, for, as though it were contrary to their own good taste, it was luckily soon quashed. Presently the procession was seen advancing under the cocoanut-trees, headed by women dancing in time to the singing; these again led by two principal dancers—one, the chief's daughter, a tall, handsome girl in a gorgeous head-dress made of bleached human hair and embellished in front with a mirror, which reflected the sun, and with a beautiful mat round her waist; the other, a warrior, who went through the most curious evolutions with a war-club, every now and then producing roars of laughter from the native part of

the audience by manœuvres which to us were incomprehensible. These two continued dancing backwards and forwards between the house and the head of the procession, which all the time was advancing slowly, until, having arrived close to us, their presents were deposited on the ground, and they retired, mingling with the crowd. A few more speeches were then delivered, and, the proceedings having terminated, we walked back in the cool of the evening.

Next day the king came on board again, and also seventy-eight natives from the village of Safota, who wished to attend a meeting at Apia.

We started in the evening, and arrived at Apia the next morning. All the first watch, that is from 8 to 12 p.m., the natives were dancing and singing on the upper-deck, so that you would have thought Bedlam, or its equivalent in Samoa, was turned loose; we were heartily glad to get rid of them as soon as possible next morning. The *Samoan Times* of this week had an article inquiring if her Majesty's ships are going to be turned into passenger-steamers for *oiled natives.* The editor of this paper, however, has now

"licked the dust," or *drunk the oil*, if you like it.

On the Sunday following we went out to Mr. B.'s station to lunch, on which occasion Mrs. B. killed one of the fatted turkeys for which they are famous. A four-mile walk through cocoanut and cotton groves and some lovely bush brought us to our destination. Mr. B. manages for the firm of G. and Co., which has just become bankrupt, a plantation of several thousand acres. The labourers he employs are not Samoans, but natives of the Line Islands, that is, the Gilbert, Marquesas, &c., groups. Thinking I had already seen all the different kinds of dances practised in the South Seas, I was equally surprised and pleased to witness one among these people which was perfectly new and very extraordinary. After lunch we went out towards the native quarter. It being Sunday, and therefore a holiday, the aborigines were all assembled together in a large shed, and apparently "making a regular day of it." Half a dozen or so at a time would get up and perform before the rest, who were seated on the floor of the shed, watching them with the deepest interest.

It certainly was the most curious sight to watch I ever beheld. The countenances of the Line Islanders are generally hideously plain, but very expressive.

As I said before, half a dozen or so at a time would get up and grouping themselves so as to afford the best possible view to the spectators, would proceed to chant a strain, the words of which, I believe, would not bear translation into polite English, explanatory of some event which had happened on a particular occasion. This song would be accompanied by the most rapid gestures, also expressing ideas. The leader with one hand on high, and the other pointing to the front, or slapping his breast and thighs; the others gesticulating a sort of assent, or reduplication of the leader's ideas. Now the chant would be low and soft, and now, working up to a climax, would burst out in a wild shout, accompanied by proportionately violent gesticulations; at the same time their countenances seemed to portray their every thought and deed, as they threw their whole heart and soul into the relation of the story, and it might indeed be said that each face was a striking exposition of the actor's feelings.

At the finish they would resume their seats, quite exhausted, amid the plaudits of the excited audience. After a short interval another set would proceed with the exposition of fresh incidents.

And so passed the Sabbath-day.

I could not help thinking that with a little stretch one might imagine the same scene being enacted in the large cage in the monkey-house at the "Zoo."

It is indeed curious to compare the national songs of these islands one with the other, and also collectively with those of more civilized countries. Disraeli says, "The character of a people is preserved in their national songs," which may notably be observed among these people. These Line Islanders have few ideas beyond eating and bestiality, so their songs are expressive of a "good feed" they have had, or of some revolting incident. Again, the songs of the Samoans would in polite Europe be considered immoral, but do not appear so among these simple-minded people.

The principal songs or dances of the Maories relate to fighting, and are typical of their warlike nature. Again, quoting Dr. Johnson, talking of the Highlanders, the

same author has, "They accompany every action which can be done in equal time with an *appropriate strain*, which has, they say, not much meaning, but its effects are regularity and cheerfulness. There is an *oar-song* used by the Hebrideans." So, among these people, when paddling in a canoe, they keep time to a chant, in which one leads and the others respond, the thump of the paddles on the side of the canoe, as they finish their stroke in perfect unison, forming an appropriate addition—this, at the same time, cheering them on to their labour. Again, from the same: "The old songs of England, which were collected in penny books, called 'Garlands,' have been described as 'humble and amusing village strains, founded upon the squabbles of a wake, tales of untrue love, superstitious rumours, or miraculous traditions of the hamlet.' They enter into the pictures of our manners as much as folio chronicles." Just so the songs sung among the Samoans in their "sivas." But among no European traditions can I find anything that corresponds to these *illustrated chants*, or songs accompanied by appropriate gesticulations and contortions.

PART III.

EGYPT.

EGYPT.

SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL, CAIRO,
January, 5th 188—.

HERE I am at last, perfectly happy, in a long straw chair, basking in the sun, with a soothing pipe, on the verandah in front of Shepheard's Hotel, with all the animate sights of Cairo passing before me; but I must go back a little to our arrival at Port Said. Finding I should lose a day by remaining longer in the P. and O. steamer, I disembarked, spent a few hours in a French hotel on shore, said good-bye to Miss "Jerusalem" (our charming and accomplished fellow-passenger), and took passage in the Egyptian postal steamer, which started at midnight for Ismailia. The steamer was small and poky; but I was very tired, and lay down on a sofa, determined to sleep till the morning; but soon the

mosquitoes began to buzz, and when we started I found three noisy Egyptian soldiers my fellow-passengers, and to sleep became hopeless. All night I tossed about without a wink, and at last, as daylight began to be felt, went on deck to see the sun rise, for which I was well repaid. The sky was covered with cold grey clouds, which gradually changed through pink to gold, and finally to silver. Ismailia at 7 a.m.; French hotel; café au lait; cigarette; warm bath, very refreshing; déjeuner, most respectable. Away to the railway-station; extortion by native porters, whom I was too feeble to resist. Across the desert dozing; one hour and a half at Zakazik; lunch; visit to Bubastis, the town and temple of Artemis described by Herodotus, where the whole of the people of Egypt in ancient times (about 700,000) used to assemble for an annual festival with great sacrifice and much drinking of wine. Now it is nothing but a collection of huge mounds, a mixture of earth and fragments of red pottery, presenting a peculiar appearance from a distance, but uninteresting on a closer inspection. Train again; along the edge of the Delta, on

the border of richly-cultivated land, the deep green of which presents such a refreshing contrast to the glare of the desert; conversation with an Egyptian who had spent ten years at school in England; expressed great admiration for our country, its climate and its institutions, and a corresponding disparagement of Egypt; spoke very well of Arabi Bey, whom he compared to Garibaldi. Arrival at Cairo, so worn out with travel that I could not sit through Salvini's performance of *Othello* at the theatre, but was forced to retire to bed.

SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL, CAIRO,
January, 188—.

For the last four or five days I have not written a line. Our days have been taken up with long excursions, starting after an early breakfast, and returning in time for dinner. Bother these flies!—basking in the sun is not an unmixed joy. Our party of friends now consists of five, including a wealthy and eccentric young man travelling with a tutor. The latter has an onerous and unpleasant charge; for the former, among other eccentricities, insists on believing that his meals are tampered with by his tutor, who he says

puts baby-powders in his breakfast. Our excursions are generally taken on donkeys. The selection of a donkey by a "new chum" is always an occasion for much excitement. He emerges from the hotel, placidly smoking a cigar, strolls leisurely down the steps, and hails the nearest donkey-boy; but the thousand and one other donkey-boys who are waiting in the street have also observed his motions, and bear down upon him in close order, hustling, bustling and jostling, shouting and yelling, and mobbing the innocent individual, so that he is helpless to choose a donkey, and does not know which way to turn; till at last he is pushed and hauled on to one of the animals, whether he will or no, and suddenly finds himself riding at full gallop down the street, not knowing where he is going, but uncomfortably conscious that he is looking very awkward, and deafened by the yells of his donkey-boy triumphant, who, as he shouts, whacks the donkey from behind with a long and supple cane. This is the way the uninitiated do it. In a day or two the same individual may be seen cautiously selecting his donkey from the balcony of the hotel, a calmer and a wiser man.

First day. Mount "Dizzy" and "Flying Dutchman" (our respective donkeys), and away to the citadel. It is situated on high ground at the back of the town, and commands a splendid view; in the distance, the desert, with the pyramids of Sakhara and Gizeh; nearer, the fertile Delta of the glorious Nile; at our feet, the quaint streets, with the numerous palaces and mosques. The palaces are fine buildings, built by the late Khedive, who, although he wisely increased the revenue of the country, unwisely lavished the money on these costly edifices for the use of himself and family. At our back the barren but remarkable Mokattam Hills, stretching out across the desert in the direction of the Red Sea. The citadel was built with stones taken from the smaller of the three pyramids at Gizeh; the story being that about the year 1200 a certain vizier was persuaded by his courtiers to demolish this pyramid; so he set to work; but after eight months of incessant labour the undertaking had to be abandoned, for, though they had removed enough material to build the citadel and several other imposing edifices, the pyramid still stood enormous in the desert, as if

nothing had been done to it. It was just as if a few gnats had been trying to eat an elephant. And this pyramid, compared with either of the two larger ones, is as a molehill by the side of a mountain. This will give you some idea of the size of these wonders and the labour it must have been to erect that which it was found almost impossible to remove. But having flown from the citadel to the pyramids, a distance of six or seven miles, let us fly back again to the citadel, in the centre of which stands a magnificent mosque, begun in 1824 by Mohammed Ali, and finished in 1857 by Said Pasha. Both sides of the walls of this building are overlaid with slabs of the most beautiful alabaster, of a delicate white or creamy yellow colour. On entering we find ourselves in a large quadrangle, open to the sky, with a fountain in the centre, at which the people wash themselves before entering the mosque proper, which is also in the shape of a quadrangle, with a roof of domes rising one above the other towards the centre. These domes are handsomely painted, the floor is softly laid with fine Eastern carpets, and from the roof hang countless lamps; a dim light is admitted through

coloured glass windows, and the whole effect is very pleasing. In a corner is the tomb of Mohammed Ali, inclosed by a framework of gilded wood; and in the opposite corner is a space set apart for the Sultan, also inclosed by a railing.

Mount "Dizzy" and "Flying Dutchman," and away through the streets, narrow and crooked, past houses with overhanging roofs and quaint old windows of carved wood; charging through crowds of people, camels, and donkeys, with frequent collisions which would appear dangerous to life and limb, though accidents rarely happen. Leaving the streets, we turn off to the bazaars, where the way is narrower and the crowd thicker than before, and occasionally progress is impossible. We spend half an hour turning over the wares of Mr. Joseph Cohen, smoke his cigarettes and drink his coffee, express much admiration for his goods, but buy nothing at present. Home to lunch. I don't think we could ever get tired of wandering through these streets and bazaars, with their infinite variety of human character, colour, and scenery. But it has all been described in so many books of

Eastern travel that I will not attempt it again.

Our next day was a "*dies non*," Arthur being indisposed. Our eccentric friend declares that his tutor has ordered his clothes to be washed in potash water.

Sunday, January 15*th*, 188—.

The weather has turned bitterly cold and we are all shivering; there is only one fire in the hotel, and it is a lucky person who can get near it.

January 17*th.*

Third day. A quiet ride along the banks of the Nile, than which nothing could be more pleasant; along fine roads, beneath continuous avenues of trees, which afford agreeable shade, while the sunlit scene surrounds us. Not many years ago, they say, there was not a tree in Cairo; but the late Khedive, among other beneficent actions for which he has not received sufficient credit, caused these trees to be planted along all the principal roads within and around Cairo, thereby adding much both to the comfort of the people and the appearance of the place.

Fourth day. Mount our four-footed

friends, and away to the pyramids of Gizeh. A party of four; the eccentric one, having come down late, promises to follow us in a carriage, on condition that he finds his breakfast has not been tampered with. We were disappointed at not having him with us, as we wanted to see him on top of a donkey. A cold morning, which made the donkeys lively, and we rattled along at a good pace, "Flying Dutchman" taking the lead against all competitors.

I forgot to mention that occasionally, when donkey-riding, you experience a curious sensation, as though the donkey had collapsed between your legs, and, alighting softly on your back, you arise almost expecting to find the donkey has vanished into space; but, to your surprise, there he is, all ready for you to mount again, having picked himself up quicker than you did; and after remarking to your donkey-boy, "Bad donkey, tumble down," to which he replies, "No bad donkey, bad road," you remount and start afresh.

Our road lay across the bridge, then for two or three miles along the bank of the river, then, striking off to the right, along a straight avenue leading right away to the pyramids,

a distance of four miles. After a ride of two hours and a half we arrived at our destination, and, alighting from our donkeys, were immediately beset by the tribe of Arabs who live at the foot of the Great Pyramid, and are privileged to extort as much backsheesh as they can from all European visitors to the spot.

We should naturally prefer to observe these wonders unmolested, and to let our thoughts freely wander back to the past ages and the masterly people who lived 4000 years ago; but we are forcibly reminded of the present by these avaricious men, who gather round us in numbers twenty to one, and pester us beyond endurance.

The pyramids are situated on the edge of the desert, bordering on the fertile valley of the Nile.

In order to explain their origin I must carry you back to one of the most curious and noteworthy customs of the ancient Egyptians—in fact, to the main feature of their religion, which was the immortality of the soul and *the future resurrection of the body.*

They had two forms of religion: the religion of the initiated, the priests and wise

men; and the religion of the uninitiated, the people, the uneducated mass. The former believed in one God, "the All," the universe—in fact, nature deified. But the vulgar mind was not deemed able to grasp this idea, and it was also to the interest of the priests to encourage superstition, through which they exercised their power over the people and kept them in check; so they represented each of the countless attributes of nature by an idol or god, which the people were exhorted to worship and to supplicate for their several wants. Among other things they were taught that every human being consisted of three distinct parts—the body, the soul, and a portion of the Divine spirit: during life these parts were united, but after death they were separated for a time: the soul went through Hades, and, having overcome many difficulties, was purified, and returned to the body; the spirit became merged in the all-pervading Divine spirit, and, after travelling about through space for a certain time, was also reunited to the dead body, which was awaiting its return to enter on a future existence of happiness eternal.

Hence the importance they attached to the

preservation of the bodies, in consequence of which, right away through Egypt, either on the edge of the desert or on the banks of the Nile, is one immense collection of tombs, either hewn out of the rocks or in temples or pyramids erected to receive them, containing embalmed mummies of all the people who inhabited Egypt from 1000 to 4000 years ago. A poor person of course only had a hole in the rock; but a king erected the largest and most lasting monument he could devise. With this idea King Cheops, when he ascended the throne, began to build the first pyramid. Having chosen the spot, he first of all cut his tomb out of the rock, and constructed a fine road from the quarries, which were situated on the other side of the river, across the intervening country, up to this spot. This occupied ten years. He then erected over the rock-cut tomb a small pyramid, and then another one outside that, and then another outside that, and so on until, towards the end of his reign of fifty years, the enormous structure which we now see was raised in the desert. It was recorded on the pyramid that 100,000 people were employed on it at one time, and also the

quantity of radishes, onions, and garlic which were consumed by the labourers during its erection, the value of which is said to have been 360,000*l.* Can you imagine from this what must have been the cost of the whole work? The other pyramids were built in the same way. Close behind the pyramid of Cheops is that of Chephren, who succeeded him; this is rather smaller. Again, a little further behind the pyramid of Chephren is the small one which I told you of before as having been attacked by a certain vizier, with the idea of demolishing it. It was erected by Mycerinus, the brother of Cheops, who succeeded Chephren. Having rested for a few minutes in a wooden house originally built for the use of the Prince of Wales, and having endeavoured to persuade the Arab chief not to permit us to be molested by more than two of his tribe apiece, we proceeded to investigate the interior of the great pyramid. It is an unpleasant business, as you will see as we proceed; for, after vainly expostulating with your Arab guides, under the impression that you can get on alone, while they are firmly convinced that you are quite helpless without their assistance (the

truth being that they are very useful in some parts of the passage), they place themselves one on each side of you, and each seize an arm, while another man (not bargained for) goes in front with a candle. They then dive through the entrance and along a steep and slippery passage, so low that you go sliding down in a doubled-up position. In a short time, during which you begin to discover that the place is very hot and stuffy (the temperature being always about 79°, and the smell of the Arabs horrid), you arrive at the bottom of this passage, and stand upright again on a level platform, while your guides stop, in order that the third man with the candle (not bargained for) may demand an extra payment. The strange position, at the mercy of three black ruffians in a dark hole, is enough to frighten a timid person, and he will probably in a rash moment accede to the demand, which will be raised, according to his readiness to give way, at every resting-stage. We are now at the point where two passages meet: the one which is closed by a trap-door of granite leading down to the tomb cut out of the rock; the other passage, up to the entrance of which you

climb with some difficulty, goes upwards, and leads eventually to the king's chamber, which is near the centre of the pyramid, and the queen's chamber, which is below it. On the right of the passage, about half-way, is a hole which has been bored through from this passage to the lower one: it is supposed to have let the workmen out after the lower passage had been closed. My extra man goes down it, with the candle in his hand, clinging to the sides with his knees and elbows, while the two others hold me over the brink of the hole to see the curious sight. Extra man, after this feat, raises his tariff another two shillings. We proceed, scrambling, pushing, pulling, and s—— (tell it not!), up to the king's chamber, which extra man illuminates with magnesian wire, after having explained that this will be another two shillings' worth, and, having intentionally burnt his fingers, makes that the excuse for another rise. The chamber is awesome under the flickering light, and when one reflects that it is the tomb of a king of 4000 years ago. The walls are beautifully smooth, and at one side is the now empty sarcophagus in which the body is supposed to have lain. The candle

is now getting low, and we hurry out as quickly as we can, refusing to pay our expostulating and exorbitant guides until we are safely delivered in the fresh air, which we breathe with much relief. Then we pay our candle-bearer two shillings, which weakness is the occasion for a further attempt at extortion from our two assistants, who have been already paid for, and from whom we escape into the wooden house, much exhausted, and refresh ourselves with lunch.

ABOARD THE "NEPTHYS,"
January 25th, 188—.

I broke off my story somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Sphinx, "the Watchman," who or which for so many centuries has kept his face steadily towards that region from whence comes the sun, "the new-born light which conquers darkness." Its origin may have been earlier than that of the pyramids, though probably the head represents Chephren, the builder of the second pyramid. It was supposed to be the guardian of the burial-ground which lay at its rear, and was hewn out of the solid rock in the shape of a lion, and between its paws was a temple nestling under its breast, with the gigantic

but handsome human head towering above it. Here, as elsewhere, the all-pervading sand of the desert has smothered all but the head and back of the monster, and it is curious to stand almost on a level with its chin, and think what lies beneath you. Close to the Sphinx, and probably having some connection with it, has been found a granite temple, which is kept partially clear from the sand; and on inspecting it you are struck with wonder at the size and beauty of the blocks of granite which were raised to form its walls and pillars: a few of the chambers are formed of alabaster.

But enough of pyramids and sphinxes! Let us turn to obelisks. Our next excursion was to Heliopolis, or rather to the site of that ancient city, to see the last remaining solitary monument which marks the spot where once stood the famous "City of the Sun." Here was a temple, only rivalled by that at Memphis, in which the sun-god, Ra, was worshipped, and which gave employment to over 12,000 people of different sorts, including priests and attendants. Here were fostered the different animals sacred to the sun; such as bulls, lions, cats, and the phœnix.

Here the god Horus, son of Isis and Osiris, having in mortal combat overthrown Typhon (or the devil), was cured of his wounds. Here the great Pharaohs, who in succession were termed "Lord of Heliopolis," expended vast sums in dedications to the god. Here was the most celebrated of the ancient schools of learning, and now . . . one stands in the middle of a bare field, gazing at an ugly obelisk, vainly endeavouring to reason back from this to what has gone before. There it stands, this huge block of granite, with no apparent connection with anything past, present, or future, and yet . . . it was one of the many obelisks of Heliopolis, "emblems of the sun's rays," which were erected in honour of Ra.

Our excursion as usual was accomplished on the backs of our four-footed friends, and having wandered round the monument, and watched the bees which now store their honey in the deep-cut hieroglyphics, we walked back a little way to a small French restaurant, where, sheltered from the mid-day heat of the sun by a vine creeping over some open trellis-work, and with the view between its leaves of a beautiful garden with many flowers,

where stands a tree, under the shade of which the Virgin and Child rested during the flight into Egypt, and with the cooing of pigeons in a dovecot overheard, we discussed our paper of sandwiches with the aid of the French lady's tea.

We will now pass on to our expedition to Sakhara, leaving less important proceedings to be detailed later on. You must know that about fifteen miles from Cairo, higher up the Nile, is the site of the ancient town of Memphis, built by Menes, the first earthly king of Egypt (for he is supposed to have been preceded by the gods themselves), and within which he also placed the temple of Ptah, "the greatest of Egyptian gods," who represented the principle of regeneration through moisture, "the lord of truth;" the animal sacred to him was the bull of Apis, which was the offspring of a white cow impregnated by a moonbeam, and was kept in the temple as representing the god during lifetime, and after his death was embalmed and buried in a large granite sarcophagus in the Serapeum or tombs of Apis, situated on the edge of the desert of Sakhara; and with such magnificence were the obsequies of these bulls per-

formed that as much as 20,000*l.* may have been spent on one occasion.

It was our wish then to visit this spot, where also are some more pyramids, though not so famous as those of Gizeh. Accordingly our party of four, having compounded with Ali Hassan to provide us with tents, camels, provisions, and all necessaries for three days' camping out, and having agreed that he should superintend the management and direction of our convoy, the pitching of tents, payment of backsheesh, and generally relieve us of all trouble and responsibility on the receipt of a certain sum of money, determined to proceed to Sakhara on the Saturday, spend that night, Sunday, and the following night encamped on the desert, and, after leisurely inspecting all the wonders to be seen, to return to Cairo.

So on Saturday morning, about ten o'clock, we mounted our donkeys, the camels having gone on before at three in the morning, and galloped gaily out of Cairo, along the road to Gizeh, for three or four miles, and then by footpaths across the fields, past groves of date-palms, curious old mud villages and Arab encampments (corresponding to those of our gipsies), till we struck the desert in

the neighbourhood of Sakhara and Memphis. Proceeding to the house inhabited by M. Mariette during his excavations here, a ramshackle, one-storied building, we found our cook had arrived, and was just ready to spread before us a sufficiently savoury luncheon, to which we settled at once, our appetites having the better of our curiosity. Our meal despatched and digested, we commenced to make inquiries for the tents, of which there were as yet no tidings; so we set out in quest of them.

Our way led from M. Mariette's house towards Memphis and past the Step Pyramid, which we had ample opportunity of examining externally on our way. It is said to be the most ancient structure in the world, and its five stages or steps present a rough and crumbling appearance to the outer world. The interior, not now visible, contains a very numerous and complicated series of passages and chambers, the original use of which is uncertain, whether as tombs of bulls or of monarchs. Walking on over mounds of sand covered with fragments of broken pottery and other rubbish, and straining our eyes in the attempt to discover small antiquities,

with occasional success in the shape of a small idol, coin, or perhaps a human bone, we at length arrived at the site of our encampment, beneath an ancient far-spreading sycamore fig-tree (under whose shade was a picturesque old well), situated just on the edge of the desert, with mounds of sand on one side of us, affording shelter from the wind, and the verdant fields stretching away on the other, backed in the far distance by a barren, sun-clad range of hills, and just below us a blue lake, on whose placid waters, to my delight, a quantity of fat teal were disporting themselves. Such the site of our adopted home, but for the material it was still wanting, and we began to get anxious as to the welfare of our caravan; presently, however, we descried two camels slowly wending their way along a winding path towards us, and they soon proved to be laden with our tents and baggage. While the rest of the party were amused by assisting to pitch the tents and put our little encampment in order, I slipped off with my gun and succeeded in bagging a couple of teal, which a ready Arab boy retrieved for me, and carried back in triumph to the camp, where I found all snug for the

night, and the dinner smoking on the table in one of the tents. Two of us were to sleep in one tent, and two in another; a third tent was used for the kitchen; and by carefully closing all apertures which could admit draught, we managed to make them very snug and warm, in spite of the chilly night-air of the desert. In the evenings after dinner we sat down to play whist, and each morning and evening I managed to surprise some teal, which formed a welcome addition to our table.

The next day was devoted to sight-seeing. In the morning we rode over to the site of Memphis, of which, as of Heliopolis, very little remains, and were it not for the huge burial-ground stretching for sixty miles along the edge of the adjoining desert, and containing records of past ages, very little would be known of it. However, in front of the Temple of Ptah was a colossal statue of Rameses II., erected out of gratitude to the gods for saving his wife and family from the designs of would-be assassins, and there it lies now in a ditch, having fallen with its face downwards; during the season of winter, after the rising of the Nile, it is covered with water, and at the time of our visit was half

immersed, so that we could only see the back of the figure. This and a few fragments of other statues is all that now remains upon the site of this once magnificent city.

On the way back to our encampment an incident happened which gave us some idea of the difficulty of judging distances on the desert, and at the same time of the size of the pyramids. At the southern extremity of the long line of these monuments, stretching along the desert, is one called the "False Pyramid," from its peculiar shape. As we jogged home on our donkeys we saw this pyramid apparently but a short distance off on our left hand. Says D., looking at his watch, "We've got an hour to spare before lunch, let's go round by the False Pyramid and have a look at it." "Agreed," cry we. "Ali Hassan, we want to go and see the False Pyramid." "Very well, sir. You know how long it take? Take whole day; that fifteen mile from here!" We decided to have our lunch first at all events.

In the afternoon we visited the Necropolis, retracing our steps of the day before, over the sand-hills, past the Step Pyramid and M. Mariette's house, to the Serapeum. This, as

I mentioned before, was the burial-place of the sacred Apis bulls from the temple of Ptah, and consists of huge subterranean galleries cut out of the solid rock, and with vast recesses on each side, in which the coffins were placed. The earlier Apis tombs were each cut separately from the rock, and a temple built over them, from which a sloping passage led down into the vault; but at a later period these galleries were resorted to, and no trace of the former kind now remains. There is an avenue of sphinxes leading up to the entrance of the Serapeum, but it is now invisible, as it is completely hidden by the sand. After descending a sandy path for a few yards we entered the vaults, and, each holding a candle, proceeded to explore them. Not far from the entrance the passage is all but blocked by an enormous granite sarcophagus which, it is supposed, was destined for one of the recesses in preparation for the interment of a bull, but before it had reached its destination the place was finally closed, and the sarcophagus was left where it now is, and to this day testifies to the enormous labour it must have been to enter these ponderous coffins and place them in their allotted positions. We proceeded for

several hundred yards, through a very stuffy atmosphere, along these subterranean passages with the large cavernous recesses on each side of us, entered and examined one of the sarcophagi, the lid of which has been partially removed, and, starting from the far end of the gallery, lit several coloured lime-lights which we had brought with us, and by the illumination they afforded, which produced a very wonderful and over-awing effect, found our way back again to the light of day, much impressed by all we had seen.

We next proceeded to the tomb of Ti, an example of those burial-places which were built above ground, as opposed to those cut out of the rock. Ti was "a dignitary of the highest rank," in the service of one of the kings of the fifth dynasty, who reigned about 4500 years ago. Here upon the walls of the tomb, executed in fine bas-relief, is the history of his life, with many excellent portraits of the great Ti himself. Here we see the offering of gifts; the sacrificing of bulls; "a complete poultry-yard, with geese, pigeons, and cranes, which are being fed with corn;" boats conveying retainers to do homage to the deceased Ti; "harvest-scenes

representing the reaping, stowing, and transport of corn, &c." The driver of a herd of donkeys says to them, "People love those who go on quickly, but strike the lazy: if thou couldst but see thine own conduct!" Then we have ship-building scenes; lists of all Ti's domestic animals; groups of carpenters, masons, &c.; a cow being milked, with calves skipping about in the most life-like manner. Then a grand representation of Ti hunting hippopotami on the Nile. And lastly a fishing scene, in which the overseer, leaning on his staff, says to his servants, "Ye are like apes;" to which they good-humouredly reply, "Thy command is executed; it is done excellently." Hence we know almost as much about Ti's manner of life as his own people did. Do you think our descendants 4500 years hence will know as much about us? I doubt it. Printing spreads knowledge, and tends to the enlightenment of mankind, but our books are not made of imperishable stone.

The next morning we reluctantly broke up our encampment, all agreeing that we could have spent two or three more days here very pleasantly.

We had a bright warm day, and rode leisurely home to Cairo, lunching on the way and enjoying a siesta in a field of fresh-scented beans, with the fragrance of which we mixed that of the universal weed.

And now, as we are nearing Malta, and my time for writing freely is consequently short, I must compress a few of the remaining sights of Cairo into a smaller space.

As to the dervishes, you have probably heard of them so often that another description would only weary you, especially as really to appreciate their grotesque customs they must be seen. The dancing dervishes may be seen in ten minutes; but "the howlers" I could watch for a long time, and still be lost in wonder at their frantic efforts to become oblivious of the things of this world, in order that their spirits may for a few moments ascend to mix with that of the Prophet.

Of ruined mosques and tombs we visited a good many, but they will not repay description. Cairo is a city of uninhabited ruins, ruinous habitations, and magnificent palaces.

Of churches, the old Coptic was very

interesting. The Copts were a sect of Christians who, at the time of the dissensions as to the nature of Christ, whether Divine or human, or both, refused to believe in any but His Divine nature, in which they held that every human element was absorbed. There are a large number who still profess this doctrine, but their religious ceremonies have gradually degenerated into mere outward forms, without any idea of their original meaning, and they are said to be a narrow-minded lot, and lukewarm religionists in comparison with some of their more devout Mohammedan brethren. In old Cairo may be seen the oldest Coptic church, dating from the sixth or eight century, and which forms the model for all other Coptic churches. Below it there is a crypt in which the Virgin and Child are said to have spent a month after their flight into Egypt. The principal features of the church are its division into small compartments by wooden screens decorated with very inferior carving, and the adornment of its walls with atrocious oil portraits of the Virgin and different saints.

One pleasant afternoon was spent in some beautiful gardens attached to a villa built by

an Italian storekeeper at Alexandria, upon which he has spared no cost; lovely flowers and shrubs, interspersed with miniature lakes and rivulets, grottoes, summer-houses, and shaded nooks, meet one at every turn, and in the centre stands an imposing mansion.

Another day we visited a house built by a French gentleman named St. Moritz, who, having first made a collection of beautiful ceilings, built his house up to them; everything is in the most exquisite taste—beautiful tiles and woodwork, eastern carpets and curtains, handsome bedsteads and mantle-pieces,—all "olo piecy," as we used to say in China,—collected together from different quarters. A good deal of our spare time was spent in the bazaars: result, a large packing-case now on its way to England.

Having seen everything, we came to the conclusion that Cairo was not a very healthy place to stop long at; for, though the climate up the Nile may be good enough, Cairo itself is a relaxing and unwholesome place. So packing up bag and baggage, we took passage in one of Moss's steamers from Alexandria, and here we are within twenty miles of Malta, where we shall arrive shortly

before midnight. We have had a beautiful calm voyage, but still not fine enough to please aunt, who will be very glad to get on shore again.

Saturday, February 25th, 188—.

Messina by moonlight! It is now little more than a year since I last saw it under the same conditions.

Above us the moon shining silv'ry, and leaving a track on the ocean;
'Twixt the moon and the mountains of Sicily a dense black cloud-bank was hanging,
So that the mountains, in shadow, seem'd blackness intense and exemplified.
Then between mountains and water the bright shining lights of the township,
Yellow, transparent, and widespread, bright emblems of civilization;
And in the midst, from the lighthouse, one flashing first white and then red,
Swiftly the ship blew before it, and on 'twixt Charybdis and Scylla,—
Sights such as this will remind us the spirit of God is in all things.

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